THE DEVELOPMENT AND ENABLEMENT OF A

FEED-FORWARD CREATIVITY TEAM

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For Stephanie, My Beloved

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Glory to God!

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to consider the pastor's workload and the amount of congregational participation surrounding the formation of the weekend service and offer the development and enablement of a feed-forward creativity team as a possible solution to easing the pastor's workload and offering more opportunities for congregational involvement. Early research revealed that the typical pastor's workload had the potential to make him or her a creative bottleneck in the formation of timely, relevant, and memorable weekend services in which the congregation experiences God in a life-changing way.

After establishing the problem and its setting, this thesis goes to the Bible and theological sources to develop a clear theological framework of both teams and creativity. The thesis also gives a lengthy literature review of current resources that had a major impact in the research and development of the premise of using a feed-forward creativity team in the context of a local church. This thesis also provides the methodology used in developing a 'how-to" training manual for developing a feed-forward creativity team to help the local church. Finally, this thesis concludes that teamwork and creativity are justified biblically and theologically and when used with wisdom and discernment have the potential to enhance the weekend worship services in the local church.

Chapter 1

The Problem and Its Setting

The typical worship service in churches today involves limited input and member contribution in its planning and development. Service planning and development involves many elements including sermon preparation, song selection, as well as establishing the order of service and deciding when and if additional elements, such as drama, Scripture reading, and prayer are needed. A brief phone survey of twelve local churches of various denominations found in many cases that service planning and development is often left to two or three people. This group, according to the survey, usually consists of the senior pastor, a music leader, and occasionally one additional staff person. It was reported that the senior pastor takes responsibility as the primary planner in most of the churches surveyed.[1] This paradigm impacts the worship experience in several ways. First, numerous members and attendees, with their God-given gifts, talents, and skills are sidelined and not given an opportunity to use them in a satisfying way. Second, because service development has been limited to two or three people, the majority of church attendees are left to shuffle in and out of church week after week, allowed only to participate in the worship service not its creation or planning.

Unless this paradigm is changed, two glaring implications may occur. First, the pastor as the primary planner and creator of weekend worship services will become the

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[1]See appendix one. This survey is represented by five different denominations. Four additional churches classify themselves as non-denominational.

bottleneck to a more creative and meaningful worship experience because he or she has limited time, energy, and creative capacity. Second, the regular church attendees may grow bored and perhaps frustrated with their lack of opportunity to exercise their gifts, talents, and abilities in the worship service planning and development process. While the entire congregation cannot be involved in the creation of a worship service, the strategic use of several qualified members could greatly enhance the service.

The balance of this chapter will further explore how the pastor has the potential to be the bottleneck in creative worship service planning, consider the ideal situation for the church concerning membership involvement, and explore why the majority of its membership is disengaged in worship planning despite a growing desire to be involved. Finally, one possible solution that has the potential to assist both the pastor and the congregants in their joint desire for being involved in genuine worship will be introduced.

The pastor of the local church must manage a wide variety of tasks and expectations. These include counseling, administration, vision-casting, and volunteer recruitment, in addition to weekly sermons and worship service planning. The final items on this list, sermon preparation and service planning, are most public. Most congregants expect it to be done at a high level every time. In the traditional paradigm the quality of one's weekend worship experience is put on the shoulders of one individual. That is a tremendous amount of pressure. It would be a difficult job if it was the only task the pastor had to do each week, but it is not. As noted above, he or she has multiple responsibilities that compete for time. Not only is time an issue, but so is creative capacity. One person can generate limited ideas because of limited life experience and

knowledge. Time and capacity force the pastor to, inevitably, become a bottleneck in worship service planning.

A goal of this project is to provide the local pastor a new strategy which will enable him or her to create more compelling worship services by empowering gifted members of the congregation to assist with the development of both the worship service and the weekend message. By enlisting a team of volunteers the pastor will be able to apply additional man hours, more knowledge, and greater life experience to the service planning and message preparation process with the potential result of greater overall service quality.

The weekend message is a key component to the overall worship service and having enough time to prepare for a meaningful worship experience is often a challenge for pastors. Because the number of hours in a week is fixed, the pastor can only put limited time into sermon planning. Varying results have been recorded regarding the amount of time pastors spend in sermon preparation. Thom Rainer reports that more than 90 percent of pastors in America spend only two hours per week in sermon preparation for each message preached.[2] In previous research, he reports that pastors of evangelistic churches, those who are intentional in reaching the unchurched for Christ, spend just over ten hours in preparation for each message.[3] In *Biblical Sermons*, Haddon Robinson has put together a collection of sermons, which he analyzes and follows with an interview of the preacher. One of the questions he asks each preacher is how much time they typically

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[2]Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights From the Unchurched: and Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 67.

[3]Thom S. Rainer, *High Expectations: The Remarkable Secret for Keeping People in Your Church* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 76.

spend in sermon preparation. The answers ranged from a minimum of six hours per message to a maximum of thirty hours per message. The overall average, however, is just over fifteen hours per message.[4] Lori Carrell reports in *The Great American Sermon Survey* that the average amount of time that pastors spend on sermons is nine hours. She further clarifies her findings by noting that the average time in preparation for a Catholic priest is three hours and that the average time for a Protestant preacher is eleven hours.[5] Because of the variety of tasks and expectations facing the pastor along with the constraints of time it is understandable that the pastor could become a creative bottleneck in service and sermon planning. Since the number of hours in a week cannot be easily increased, other solutions must be sought for building a more meaningful weekend service.

Having explored how the pastor has the potential to be the bottleneck in creative worship service planning, this chapter will now consider a more ideal situation for the church concerning membership involvement. One metaphor used to describe the church in Scripture is "the body of Christ." This metaphor suggests how unfortunate it is to involve only one person in planning the entire worship service. Millard J. Erickson writes that "the church is the locus of Christ's activity now just as was his physical body during his earthly ministry."[6] Erickson further explains the metaphor of the body by pointing out that Christ is the head of the body and that its image reveals a "connection of

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[4]Haddon Robinson, ed. *Biblical Sermons: How Twelve Preachers Apply the Principles of Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 27, 45, 65, 85, 109, 127, 147, 173, 217, 235, 259.

[5]Lori Carrell, *The Great American Sermon Survey* (Wheaton, IL: Mainstay Church Resources, 2000), 108.

[6]Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 1047.

the church, as a group of believers, with Christ."[7] The body image also points the

interconnectedness between all genuine believers who make up the church.[8] Thus each

member is dependent on all the others for the body to function as it was designed by God.

Erickson concludes, "As the body of Christ, the church is the extension of his ministry."[9]

If the work of Christ is to be accomplished at all, it will be done by his body, the church.

In order to carry out the work of Christ, God has provided the church a variety of

gifts. Each believer is given at least one spiritual gift, not for personal gratification or

enrichment, but for the edification of the entire body. All the gifts are important and

needed by the church and no one person has all the gifts. Thus, individual church

members need the other members to exercise their giftedness.[10] So when the pastor and

perhaps the music leader do not give other members of the congregation opportunities to

be involved in worship service planning, they are not only hurting themselves, but the

entire church.

Despite a more ideal situation for membership involvement supported by the

metaphor of "the body," many members remain disengaged despite a growing desire to

be involved. Lack of opportunity to participate in worship service planning has the

potential to lead to boredom and frustration among the congregation, especially those

from the post-modern generation. This is important in my context and the context of this

project. I am the founding pastor of a church plant in Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina.

Fuquay-Varina is a rapidly growing area located just outside the state capital of Raleigh

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[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., 1049.

[10]Ibid., 892.

in southeast Wake County. The people that make up the congregation of Holland Community Church, as well as the audience we are attempting to reach, are typically young couples whose ages range between the late twenties and early thirties and thus have been classified as post-modern. Many of these couples have small children. Well over half of the congregation is comprised of previously unchurched people. I would not describe our worship style as "seeker-driven," though we are certainly sensitive to potential barriers that could confuse and frighten those new to the church worship experience. Of the bulk of those who were previously churched, this is their first experience with regular commitment and involvement in a church. While the spiritual maturity level of Holland Community Church is very young, the majority is eager and anxious to learn what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. In an attempt to connect our culture with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ, we offer music that is contemporary. Worship at Holland Community Church would not be classified as "high church." Our dress is casual, but our approach to God is not. Despite these factors, I believe that pastors and congregants of more liturgical churches can find value from the results of this project.

Robert E. Webber calls those of the post-modern generation that are involved and impacting the church, "the younger evangelicals." [11] This group, according to Webber, does not necessarily have to be young in age; they can be young in spirit. They must, however, deal thoughtfully with the shift from twentieth to twenty-first-century culture. Furthermore, they are "committed to construct a biblically rooted, historically informed,

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[11]Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 15-16.

and culturally aware new evangelical witness in the twenty-first century."[12] Webber

writes that this group of church attendees is not drawn to and impressed by "showy"

worship. They do not want to be passively entertained; they want to be involved. They

desire to be part of a worship service that is God-centered and includes the following: a

genuine encounter with God, genuine community, depth and substance, creative use of

the senses, visuals, and the opportunity for participation.[13] Dan Kimball, a leader of what

is being called the Emerging Church, concurs that both participation and experience are

very important to the emerging generations. He argues that "worshipping God together

in community should be a participatory and experiential event." [14] This new generation

desires to learn through interactive and participatory experiences. Kimball's and

Webber's observations inform the issue of involvement in service planning and

development which can include and be a venue for worship participation. Making this

generational transition will be a challenge for current church leaders whose older

congregants have been greatly influenced by television and come to church expecting to

watch "easy, effortless, and even entertaining communication."[15]

     Having explored how the pastor has the potential to be the bottleneck in creative

worship service planning, offered a more ideal situation for the church concerning

membership involvement, and considered a current trend to be more involved in worship

and the worship planning experience, one possible solution that has the potential to assist

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[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., 188-89.

[14]Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 155.

[15]Timothy A. Turner, *Preaching to Programmed People: Effective Communication in a Media-Saturated Society* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1995), 20.

both the pastor and the congregants will be introduced. One solution to finding the balance between today's post-modern generation which wants more than detached observation and the television-influenced group that simply wants to enjoy excellent communication is the development and enablement of a feed-forward creativity team to assist with sermon preparation and worship service development. By "feed-forward" I mean a team that provides energy, insights, and advice ahead of the service or sermon as opposed to after it. This team has the potential to engage more of the congregation in creative, corporate, experiential worship.

This project will show that neither the Bible nor theology supports the practice of one person carrying the church's ministry burden alone. This research will show that teamwork in local church ministry is not only biblically acceptable, but expected. By empowering members of the congregation to be involved in worship service planning and in the sermon series development process, they are allowed to use their unique gifts and talents in creative ways and thus feel needed and useful in the church. For example, the team could be commissioned to write a series of related dramas that would raise key questions that the pastor desires to answer with the sermons. Or in a more liturgical setting, the team could be charged to decorate creatively the auditorium during Advent.

The use of creativity is an exciting way to capture the attention of the audience, and a viable way to involve the gifts and talents of the local congregation. This thesis asks the question: How can the local church develop and enable a feed-forward creativity team to enhance corporate worship? Chapter 2 will offer a Biblical and theological framework for the concept of a creativity team. Chapter 3 will examine and evaluate current thoughts and trends on creativity teams in a literature review. Chapter 4 will

describe and evaluate the use of the training manual I developed to equip local church

members to develop and enable a feed-forward creativity team. Finally, chapter 5 will

discuss the findings, effects, and future steps regarding a feed-forward creativity team.

Chapter 2

A Theological Framework

Having established the problem and its setting in chapter one, this chapter will offer a biblical and theological framework for the concept of a feed-forward creativity team. The Bible and theology, including current thoughts and trends on the subject matter, will be explored. The layout of my research is divided into three primary sections: teams, creativity, and creativity teams.

Teams

The first primary section to be examined is teams. In this section I will make a biblical and theological case for teams by first, exploring the nature of the triune God. How the three persons of the godhead interact will be studied. Next, the nature of God's body, the church, will be explored. Scripture will be examined to discover how God intends for the various parts of the body to interact. Third, examples drawn from the Bible will be discussed that display the potential positive results of employing a team. Finally, teams will be defined and modern thought given regarding the use of teams.

The study of teams will begin with a consideration of the nature of God. The doctrine of the trinity is one of the most important, yet most difficult to comprehend, doctrines of the Christian faith. While the word "trinity" is not found in the Bible, the concept of a three-in-one God is clearly there and gives the student of Scripture great insight into what God is like and how he works. The doctrine can be summarized with the

following statements. First, God is three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Second, each person is fully God. Third, there is one God.[1]

The Trinity is incomprehensible, and it is certainly not the purpose of this thesis to bring clarity to this key doctrine, but rather take what is revealed in Scripture regarding God's three-in-one nature and apply it to the modern use of teams. Teamwork can be found in the Godhead. The Godhead reflects unity and diversity, and all three persons have different primary functions in relating to the world. Grudem argues that these different functions can be seen in the work of creation. "God the Father spoke the creative words to bring the universe into being. But it was God the Son, the eternal Word of God, who carried out these creative decrees….The Holy Spirit was active as well in a different way, in 'moving' or 'hovering' over the face of the waters, apparently sustaining and manifesting God's immediate presence in his creation."[2] Distinct functions of the three persons can be seen in the work of redemption as well. Grudem notes:

> God the Father planned redemption and sent his Son into the world. The Son obeyed the Father and accomplished redemption for us. God the Father did not come and die for our sins, nor did God the Holy Spirit. That was the particular work of the Son. Then, after Jesus ascended back into heaven, the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son to apply redemption to us….It is especially the role of the Holy Spirit to give us regeneration or new spiritual life, to sanctify us, and to empower us for service. In general, the work of the Holy Spirit seems to be to bring to completion the work that has been planned by God the Father and begun by God the Son.[3]

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[1] Wayne Grudem, *System Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 231.

[2]Ibid., 249.

[3]Ibid., 249.

Thus, while each person of the Godhead is fully God and equal in their attributes, each

has different functions in relating to the world. Because God displays both unity and

diversity in his nature, it is not surprising that some of that unity and diversity can be

found in the nature and works of man. In fact, there are many activities in which

individual humans contribute to the unity and purpose of a larger activity, such as, in a

musical performance, on an athletic team, or as part of a local church. While

comprehension of the Trinity will never be achieved, modeling God in both unity and

diversity can be obtained in a team environment.

Having explored the nature of the triune God, this section will now consider the

nature of God's body, the church. The local church gives insight as to how God expects

its members to interact with one another. The church or the body of Christ, as it is

described metaphorically in the New Testament, provides foundational teaching on

interdependence and teamwork. "The church is the community of all true believers for

all time."[4] This unique group has been assembled by Jesus Christ himself and has been

equipped with various gifts with which to carry out his work. The gifts are "simply

tools" and no believer has all the gifts. As a result, the metaphor of the church as the

body of Christ should increase church members' interdependence on each other.[5]

Commenting on the oneness the body of Christ has through diversity from 1Cor. 12:12-

26, Gilbert Bilezikian writes:

> As his body, the church does not function through just one of its members, such
> as a pontiff or a head bishop, neither is it ruled by a few people such as the clergy.
> "For the body does not consist of one member but of many" (v. 14 RSV). All the

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[4]Ibid., 853.

[5]Ibid., 859, 1031.

members together make up the body, the church (v. 12). To function properly, it needs the active participation of all its members. Should the foot or hand go dead, the body becomes disabled. This is why the Holy Spirit utilizes for common good the gifts with which he has endowed all individual believers (vv. 7, 11).

Just as the life of the human body is dependent on the functioning of all its parts, so the life of the church is dependent on the utilization of each person's gift. The use of only a few parts of the human body cannot make it function properly. Neither can the church function when only some of the people's gifts are utilized.[6]

Bilezikian concludes that it would be wrong for the church to assign a certain number of people to handle solely the work of ministry. Each member has been gifted and has a role to play and a contribution to make for the health and betterment of the body. Each member is needed, along with their giftedness, by all the other members.[7] Brian Dodd writes that the "conception of leadership in the body of Christ must be a theology of 'we.'"[8] The church, as a body, is to function like a team, and for the team to be successful every teammate must be engaged and prepared to contribute.

Having explored both the triune nature of God and the nature of his body, the church, this section will now examine examples of teams found in Scripture. The Bible provides multiple examples of how teamwork made a great impact in the lives of those who utilized it. Moses, in Exodus 18, discovered the benefit of teamwork and sharing the work load. Here Moses is visited by his father-in-law Jethro, who observes him carrying out some of his duties. Moses is overwhelmed by a staggering workload that required him to "judge" or arbitrate between parties based on the standard of God's law.[9] Jethro

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[6]Gilbert Bilezikian, *Christianity 101* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 190.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Brian J. Dodd, *Empowered Church Leadership: Ministry in the Spirit According to Paul* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 106.

[9]Peter Inns, *Exodus*. The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 371.

basically asks Moses, "What in the world are you doing and why are you doing it alone?"

Jethro recognized that what Moses was doing would ultimately prove destructive if he

did not get some help. He informed Moses that what he was doing was not good, that he

would wear himself out, and frustrate those he desired to help. Jethro's advice was wise

and practical. He suggested that Moses teach the people the laws and then show them the

way to live and the duties they are to perform. Then he instructed him to select capable

and trustworthy people to serve with him. In other words, build a team to help disperse

the workload. While biblical narrative is descriptive more than prescriptive, this text

does seem to imply that Jethro's advice was godly and deserves to be followed by the

other leaders. Involving others does not lessen the importance of Moses, and God never

intended for one person to do all the work himself. That is why followers of Christ have

been placed in the local church where dependence on the help and gifts of others

encourages individuals and furthers the Kingdom of God. Thus, to best utilize individual

gifts, knowledge of personal limitations is necessary.[10] For Moses to optimize his

effectiveness and usefulness for God, he had to involve others. He had to build a team.

This allowed Moses to do the things that only he could do and free others to use their

skills as well.

Modern writers echo these sentiments. For example they rightly claim that

getting the right people on the team is vital to achieving success. In the church setting,

potential team members should be godly in character and have a sense of God calling

them to be part of the team. This calling should be confirmed by others in the church that

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[10]Philip Graham Ryken, *Exodus: Saved For God's Glory* of Preaching the Word, gen. ed. R. Kent Hughes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 482-83.

know them well and their gift and skill sets should match the mission of the team.[11] In

addition to character, Bill Hybels adds competence and chemistry as criteria for adding

someone to his team.[12] Jim Collins affirms the need for competence and chemistry, and

writes that in order to achieve a breakthrough from mediocrity to greatness a team must

get the right people on the bus and the wrong people off the bus. He believes that the

right people will do the right things and deliver the best results.[13] Bennis and Biederman

add that the right people must also have the right job for team effectiveness.[14]

The book of Nehemiah provides an example of the startling accomplishments that

teamwork can bring. The third chapter of Nehemiah's account appears rather dull and

useless. Certain commentators have found it intrusive or colorless, but Raymond Brown

has different insights. He sees this list of Nehemiah's teammates as logical, graphic, and

relevant.[15] This list of names show the priority of the builders and the organization of

those involved. Importantly, it reveals the unity or team work of the people involved.

Without unity, the project would fail miserably. Brown indicates that the repeated use of

the words "next to him" or "next to them" shows the harmony and interdependent

partnership between the workers.[16] People were not meant to live in isolation, but living

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[11]George Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership: Finding Strength in Shared Responsibility* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 85-86.

[12]Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 80-81.

[13]Jim Collins, *Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap…and Others Don't* (New York: Harper Business, 2001), 41, 50.

[14]Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward Biederman, *Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books, 1997), 210.

[15]Raymond Brown, *The Message of Nehemiah* of The Bible Speaks Today, Old Testament ed. J. A. Motyer (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998), 63.

[16]Ibid., 64-65.

and working together does not eliminate individual initiative. In fact, our individual

uniqueness brings value to the team. People with varying gifts, talents, and skills can

perform complementary tasks[17] and achieve remarkable results. Nehemiah and his

teammates accomplished together what none of them could have alone. They rebuilt the

wall around Jerusalem in a mere fifty-two days!

Nehemiah's great success did not come without struggle. As in his day, forming

and maintaining a team continues to be a challenge today. The implementation of

ministry teams can be thwarted for a number of reasons. Included is the culture of the

church, the traditional expectations of the senior pastor's role, the need for control and

personal significance, and simply because churches do not know how to use ministry

teams because they are not modeled.[18]

Teams may not work effectively in every situation, and just calling a group of

people a team does not make it a team. A team is a small group of people formed around

a common purpose with a commitment to achieve certain goals. When accountability

and commitment to the cause and mission of the team are missing, that team will be

dysfunctional and ineffective. Patrick Lencioni writes of five potential dysfunctions of a

team. The first dysfunction is absence of trust. This comes from an unwillingness to be

transparent and vulnerable within the group. The second stems from the first and is fear

of conflict. Teams that do not trust each other are not able to passionately debate issues.

The next three violate the definition of team stated above: lack of commitment,

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[17]Ibid., 65-66.

[18]Barna, 64-72.

avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results.[19] However, when teams function

properly they "can be a goad, a check, a sounding board, and a source of inspiration,

support, and even love."[20] In this type of environment, teams can produce amazing

results that no individual could accomplish alone.

      The apostle Paul models teamwork well in his ministry. His views on teamwork

can be seen in some of the words he uses in his writing. One of those terms is

"koinonia," and it has been translated to mean "partnership," "fellowship," "sharing,"

"participation," or "communion." Dodd adds that Paul uses the term in three ways that

together express his theology of shared ministry. The first use of the term koinonia has

the meaning of committed, sharing relationships. The second use of the term refers to the

financial implications that a shared partnership includes. The third use combines the

previous two in a sense of a genuine partnership between co-workers or co-owners of an

enterprise. The term here expresses the deepest sense of a working partnership.[21] Also

found in Paul's writings are the use of many terms with the prefix "syn," which means,

"with" or "co-." Paul describes his ministry teammates as "co-workers," "co-prisoners,"

"co-slaves," "co-soldiers," and "co-laborors."[22] Paul not only describes his ministry

helpers, but he names them as well, mentioning over thirty names such as Barnabas,

Timothy, Luke, Titus, and Priscilla and Aquila, along with how they have furthered his

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[19]Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 188-190.

[20]Bennis and Biederman, 7.

[21]Dodd, 110-13.

[22]Ibid., 114.

cause, which was the gospel of Christ.[23] The naming of Paul's co-workers is significant in that it shows that the work of the ministry is not to be a one person show, but the diverse efforts of many are to work together to further God's Kingdom. Paul understood what Peter Drucker has observed: "The purpose of a team is to make the strengths of each person effective and his or her weaknesses irrelevant."[24]

Teams offer the opportunity of true community that goes beyond the level of being mere acquaintances. Teams can reduce stress. Ministry involvement and leadership of any kind produces stress, but the team concept can reduce that burden by spreading it out over more people. Teams also provide an environment that can produce greater synergy, more innovation, greater joy, an opportunity to model the priesthood of believers, and an avenue through which the pastor can share his ministry load.[25] The bottom line according to Katzenbach and Smith is, "Teams outperform individuals acting alone or in larger organizational groupings, especially when performance requires multiple skills, judgments, and experiences."[26]

Jesus was a team builder during his earthly ministry. In what can be described as concentric circles, Jesus had teams of increasing size around him. He had Peter, James, and John in his inner circle. That group extended out to the twelve disciples. Luke 10 mentions the seventy-two that he sent out. He continually trained and developed those closest to him to work together to further the Kingdom of God.

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[23]Ibid., 115-19.

[24]Barna, 76.

[25]Ibid., 76-82.

[26]Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization* (New York: Collins Business Essentials, 2005), 9.

Other passages that support the use of teams are Proverbs 11:14 which says, "For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisors make victory sure." Proverbs 15:22 states, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed," and Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 advises, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

Principles from the Bible support teamwork. The Godhead, the church, and key characters from Scripture model teamwork, thus, any pastor's attempt to tackle and accomplish ministry alone is unwise. In order for the pastor and the congregation to be all that they can be in Christ they must work together as a team.

The idea of the pastor drawing on outside help in his sermon preparation is not just a recent or passing fad. John Stott, for example, has been using reading and resource groups for over thirty years. He argues that involving others not only sharpens the pastor and keeps him current on relevant issues, but it involves other members of the body of Christ and thus provides them an outlet to feel useful in service to God and the church.[27] Before considering further why a team may or may not be helpful in assisting the pastor with sermon preparation, the definition of "team" should be considered.

Having explored God's triune nature, the nature of the church, and scriptural examples of teamwork in action, this section will now define what teams are and consider modern thought regarding the use of teams. Pat MacMillan defines a team as "a group of people committed to a common purpose who choose to cooperate in order to achieve

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[27]John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 194-200.

exceptional results."[28] Katzenbach and Smith similarly write, "A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable."[29] Looking at these two definitions, several common characteristics can be identified. First, and most obvious, a team is a group of people. Katzenbach and Smith argue that smaller groups or teams are more effective because they are easier to manage and keep focused. A second characteristic of teams is that they are formed around a common purpose. MacMillan adds that mutual cooperation is vital and Katzenbach and Smith believe that accountability is a key component to a successful team. A third characteristic of teams is that they are formed around what they desire to accomplish: performance goals.

A team of church members, working with their pastor with the common purpose of improving the Sunday worship experience, has the potential to be useful. Larry W. Osborne writes of his discovery that there was more to being a good preacher than just preaching. The expectations of the pastor include counseling, administration, vision-casting, and volunteer recruitment, in addition to weekly sermons. The constant grind of all these duties can exhaust the pastor and ultimately affect the spiritual environment and health of the church.[30] Keith Willhite points out that "preaching demands creative study,

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[28]Pat MacMillan, *The Performance Factor: Unlocking the Secrets of Teamwork* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 30.

[29]Katzenbach and Smith., 45.

[30]Larry W. Osborne, "Rightly Dividing the Preaching Load," gen. eds. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson, *The Art & Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today's Communicators* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 90.

but creative study week after week is draining, if not impossible."[31] Pastor Ed Young, Jr.

found that the constant demands of creative message preparation made him "kind of the

creative bottleneck."[32] In other words, his sermons on Sunday could only be as effective

and creative as his individual abilities allowed him to be that week. In *Organizing*

Genius, Bennis and Biederman make the case that "none of us is as smart as all of us"

and point out that "in all but the rarest cases, one is too small a number to produce

greatness."[33] Brian J. Dodd argues that the principal of synergism, or the idea that when

two or more people work together in the same direction, tells us that they can accomplish

more than the sum of individual efforts.[34] The bottom line is that sermon preparation is

grueling and that the individual pastor has limitations. One answer to this problem can be

found within the pastor's congregation. Each local church is made up of unique people

with diverse skills, gifts, and backgrounds. Imagine the impact that could be made if this

group's talents were tapped and unleashed in the worship service planning and sermon

preparation process!

In addition to reducing the weekly creative pressure on the pastor, the

implementation of teams also provides potential opportunities for members of the

congregation. God has uniquely designed each person and blessed them with various

passions, gifts, and talents. However, some of these passions, gifts, and talents may not

naturally fit into traditional roles provided by the local church. For example, what if

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[31]Keith Willhite, "Stop Preaching in the Dark: or Gaining Feedback Isn't Enough," *Preaching* 11, no. 6 (May-June 1996): 15.

[32]Ed Young, Jr. "Preaching Creatively: An Interview with Ed Young, Jr." Interview by Michael Duduit. *Preaching* 20, no. 4 (January-February 2005): 56.

[33]Bennis and Biederman, 1, 3.

[34]Dodd, 105.

someone in the congregation had a passion for reading or research or drama or art or had

ability to wordsmith or build appealing stage sets? Where would they find a sense of

usefulness in the church? Again, one answer would be working with the pastor to

develop more compelling Sunday services. This chapter will now examine the

theological justification for the use of creativity, as well as the potential benefit of using

creative elements in the context of a worship service.

Creativity

Having made a biblical and theological case for teams in the previous section, this

section will now make a biblical and theological case for creativity. Adding creative

elements to a worship service or sermon series can boost both congregant participation

and message retention. Like "teams," creativity is not necessarily described or prescribed

in the Bible but, as with teams, principles can be found that support the use of creativity.

The biblical and theological case for creativity will be made by first, exploring the

creative attribute of God. Then, the nature of humanity will be considered, particularly in

regards to being made in the image of God. Third, biblical examples of the use of

creativity will be given to show the potential benefits of using creativity. Finally,

creativity will be defined and modern thought examined regarding the use of creativity,

including concerns of using creativity in a church context.

The study of creativity will begin with a consideration of an attribute of God. The

Bible reveals many of the attributes and characteristics of God. The first attribute of God

that is mentioned in the Bible is found in Genesis 1:1. There it states "In the beginning

God created." The Hebrew term used here for created is *bārā'* and is used consistently in

the Old Testament in reference to a new activity.[35] Bruce Waltke points out that while

many verbs denote God's creative abilities, this term distinguishes itself because it is

used solely with God.[36] This verb means to produce something new, fresh, and perfect,[37]

and it tells the reader something about God.

Similarly, Genesis 1:26 tells the reader something about himself or herself. This

verse states that humanity was created in God's image and likeness. Being created in the

image and likeness of God gives mankind dignity and responsibility and grants the

potential and ability to mirror the Creator.[38] "Image" is used in the Old Testament for

actual forms and shapes of idols, while the term "likeness" is more abstract and used to

further clarify the meaning of image.[39] The image of God differentiates mankind from

animals and was not lost at the Fall, but was at some level affected, even reduced.[40] Old

Testament scholar John H. Walton concludes that "the image is a physical manifestation

of divine (royal) essence that bears the function of that which it represents; this gives the

image-bearer the capacity to reflect the attributes of the one represented and to act on his

behalf."[41] Theologian Wayne Grudem writes that man, being in the image of God, means

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[35]Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26* of The New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 128.

[36]Bruce Waltke, with Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 58-59.

[37]Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 106.

[38]John H. Walton, *Genesis* of The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 137.

[39]Ross, 112.

[40]Walton, 130-31.

[41]Ibid., 131.

that "man is like God and represents God." He adds that man's likeness to God can be

seen and displayed in human creativity, and that this creativity can include areas such as

the arts, music, and literature, but should not be reduced to just those areas or just to those

who excel in those areas.[42] Paul Johnson makes the following astute observation:

> Creativity, I believe, is inherent in all of us. We are the progeny of almighty God. God is defined in many ways: all-powerful, all-wise, and all-seeing; everlasting; the lawgiver; the ultimate source of love, beauty, justice, and happiness. Most of all, he is the creator. He created the universe, and those who inhabit it; and, in creating us, he made us in his own image, so that his personality and capacities, however feebly, are reflected in our minds, bodies, and immortal spirits. So we are, by our nature, creators as well.[43]

In sum, God is creative and has created man in his image and likeness. As a result, man

has the ability to be creative as well.

Men and women created in the image of God are not expected to passively inhabit

the earth. Ephesians 2:10 states, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus

to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." This verse declares that

mankind is not responsible for its own salvation, but that mankind is God's

workmanship. Mankind is his work of art or his masterpiece.[44] The purpose of God's

workmanship, his creative activity, is not merely to produce people that will sit around to

be viewed as a piece of art. No, this creation, mankind, created anew in Christ, "is to be

active and productive like the Creator."[45] Ephesians 5:1 says that we are "to be imitators

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[42]Grudem, 442, 447.

[43]Paul Johnson, *Creators: From Chaucer and Dürer to Picasso and Disney* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006), 1.

[44]John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians* of The Bible Speaks Today, New Testament ed. John R. W. Stott (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), 84.

[45]Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians* of The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 107.

of God." The language here is in the present imperative and urges the reader to continually become like God by imitation. The term means "copier" and means to be as close to the original as possible.[46] Children of God are to imitate God by following his example of love toward others, and by utilizing various attributes of God that are in mankind as the result of being created in his image and likeness. While creativity is not primarily in view in Ephesians, it is certainly included in what it means to "copy God."

The foundation of our creativity is found in our creative Creator. Having been made in his image and likeness, mankind too has the ability to be creative and use creative expression for his glory.[47]

The Bible shows various examples of "copying God" in creativity. Two examples are the story of Bezalel and Oholiab in Exodus 35 and in the life and teaching ministry of Jesus. Bezalel and Oholiab were skilled artists who were filled with the Holy Spirit and commissioned by God to supervise and implement the building plan for the tabernacle. They modeled how the use of creativity is to be used regularly in the life of the spirit-filled follower of God.[48] It should be the way of life, not the exception.[49] Jesus modeled this as well, in that all of his teaching lessons were unique and involved creativity. He would often spontaneously use visual aids such as a fig tree, a mill stone, or a coin. His stories would often connect with his audience be they farmers, shepherds,

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[46]Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 644.

[47]Alice Bass, *The Creative Life: A Workbook for Unearthing the Christian Imagination* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 17.

[48]Warren W. Wiersbe, *Preaching & Teaching with Imagination: The Quest for Biblical Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 289.

[49]Ibid., 292.

or rich men. No teacher since has better used creativity or been so compelling with his message.[50]

Before considering the potential advantages of using creativity, it must be defined with more clarity. Mark Miller defines creativity simply as "the ability to think or act differently." He points out that his definition does not include dreaming up something new, just different, and perhaps only different for you. [51] Howard Hendricks goes into more detail in describing creativity. [52] First, he identifies false assumptions about creativity. He writes that creativity is not change for the sake of change because not all change is creative. Next, Hendricks points out that creativity is not always beneficial, there can be some dire consequences of the creative process. He writes that creativity is not an end in itself, but that it is a means to achieving something better. Like Miller, he observes that creativity is not always original. Finally, Hendricks argues that creativity is not the exclusive property of the gifted few. Hendricks then defines creativity as: The generation of unique, innovative thoughts, actions, and feelings, with appropriate implementation for the benefit of others. It often means little more than the ability of perceiving in an unhabitual way. It is a function of knowledge, imagination, and evaluation.[53]

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[50]Nancy Beach, *An Hour On Sunday: Creating Moments of Transformation and Wonder* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 238.

[51]Mark Miller, *Experiential StoryTelling: (Re)Discovering Narrative to Communicate God's Message* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 58.

[52]Howard G. Hendricks, *Color Outside the Lines: A Revolutionary Approach to Creative Leadership* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 1998), 19-20.

[53]Ibid.

He narrows his definition to three essential characteristics: novelty, usefulness, and reproducibility. These characteristics taken together mean that "creativity is novelty that is useful and reproducible."[54] A similar definition from a secular source is offered by Dorothy Leonard and Walter Swap in *When Sparks Fly*. They suggest that "creativity is a process of developing and expressing novel ideas that are likely to be useful."[55] Note that all the definitions contain elements of novelty and usefulness. Michael Card, however, offers a unique perspective on creativity. He considers creativity as worship. It is a response to who God is and what he means. Card argues that the call to creativity is a call to worship and that all mankind has a drive to create because we have been fashioned in the image of God, and that image is woven into the fabric of everything we are.[56] Based on these definitions, creativity at its best is something different, novel, useful, and can be worship.

What does creativity mean and look like in the local church environment? Again, some would limit creativity just to the arts. It can include the arts, but does not have to be reduced to just art related fields. Creativity can be displayed in the stage setting, in the way the order of service is layed out, in the printed materials handed out, and in the elements chosen to make up the order of service. It can be displayed in the music used, in dramas presented, and in Scripture read. Creativity can also be seen in technological areas such as video clips and power point slides. It can also be used within the message itself. The speaker can use physical illustrations, preach inductively, deductively, or

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[54]Ibid., 23.

[55]Dorothy A. Leonard and Walter C. Swap, *When Sparks Fly: Igniting Creativity in Groups* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999), 6.

[56]Michael Card, *Scribbling in the Sand: Christ and Creativity* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002), 28-29, 39.

perhaps first-person, with or without a costume. Creativity is not limited to certain areas

of the service. Any of the elements described above can be used individually or

combined to add creativity to a worship service.

There are many positive results from incorporating creativity in a worship service.

Ed Young Jr. argues that creativity brings people in the front door of the church and

prevents them from going out the back door.[57] Howard Hendricks indicates several

benefits of creativity, two of which are vital to the Sunday morning worship experience.

The first is that creativity can help pastors meet the growing demands of a changing

society and church. The second is that creativity will infect the communicator's message

with freshness and vitality. Creativity is important to the Sunday worship service

because the higher the level of predictability, the lower the level of impact, and the lower

the level of predictability, the higher the impact.[58] Communicators should desire their

messages to have a high and lasting impact, and the use of creativity in a service can

deliver that effect. Nancy Beach argues that the aim of those responsible for putting

together a Sunday service should be to "create services so compelling, so meaningful,

and so unexpected, that the time sails by and attendees leave with an enthusiastic desire

to talk about their experience as well as the content of the service."[59]

Change and visuals are two elements that go into the practice of creativity. For

higher impact in communication, the listeners should not always know what is coming or

they will tune out the speaker and his message. Creativity can provide freshness and

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[57]Andy Stanley and Ed Young, Jr., *Can We Do That? 24 Innovative Practices That Will Change The Way You Do Church* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Co., Inc, 2002), 149.

[58]Hendricks, 9, 11.

[59]Beach, 167-68.

excitement that will keep the audience engaged.[60] Robert E. Webber observes that there

has been a shift in culture "from the reliance on print communication, a discursive and

analytical form, to cultural communication, a visual and more embodied form of

communication."[61] Because the culture has changed, the method of communication must

change as well in order to maintain its effectiveness.[62] The modern communicator must

know his audience, learn their interests, and understand their needs. Before the

communicator can have influence and impact in the life of a listener, he must understand

the sphere of understanding from which the listener is coming.[63] Part of the listener's

background has been shaped by TV. Timothy A. Turner reports that the average adult in

the local congregation between the ages of twenty-five and forty has watched thirty to

forty thousand hours of TV. The resulting challenge for communicators is that their

audience is expecting easy, effortless, and entertaining communication.[64]

So how then does the modern preacher effectively communicate with his or her

audience? Nancy Beach identifies several ingredients necessary for a message to be

transformational. The primary ingredient is that the message must be delivered by a

person who has the gift of teaching. The remaining ingredients include that it must be

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[60]Stanley and Young, Jr., 151.

[61]Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 62.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First Century Listeners* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 67-68.

[64]Timothy A. Turner, *Preaching to Programmed People: Effective Communication in a Media-Saturated Society* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Resources, 1995), 20.

biblical, it must be presented with passion, it must be relevant, creative, and honest.[65]

Here the focus will be on the ingredient of creativity. Beach urges communicators to

embrace the value of creativity for two reasons. First, because increasingly the speaker

must communicate to an audience that is overwhelmed by information and second the

speaker faces an audience that learns as much by seeing and experiencing as by

listening.[66] With attention spans shrinking, the modern pastor is faced with the challenge

of not only keeping their attention, but insuring they leave with the "big idea" of the

message. Creativity has the potential to add the spice necessary to a service or message

that will make it memorable and perhaps life changing.

Many misconceptions about creativity exist. Leonard and Swap have identified

several key myths regarding creativity. One myth is that "creative output depends on a

few, often flamboyantly different individuals." A second myth is "creative groups are

found only in 'The Arts' or in high-technology companies."[67] As noted above, all

mankind has the ability to be creative, as we are created in the image of God despite how

lacking one is in flamboyance or art skill. Other myths identified by Leonard and Swap

include "creativity is relevant only to big ideas," and "creativity only involves coming up

with new ideas."[68] Creativity can be used for subtle changes and while novelty is

important to creativity it is not limited to just new innovations. Paul Johnson points out

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[65]Beach, 231-239.

[66]Ibid., 237.

[67]Leonard and Swap, 2, 4.

[68]Ibid., 5.

that "all creative individuals build on the works of their predecessors. No one creates in

vacuo."[69]

By this time it is obvious that I value creativity, but this does not blind me to its

weaknesses. In fact, creativity may not always enhance a worship service, or more

specifically a sermon. If used inappropriately or with poor discretion, creativity can

become a distraction. As noted above, creativity has the potential to enhance the worship

service by capturing the audience's attention, providing a memorable teaching moment,

and ushering them into a meaningful experience with God. Some critics of creativity

argue that the word of God alone is sufficient and that the use of visuals, for example, is

mere fluff that hints of Hollywood entertainment and is thus a distraction to meaningful

worship of God and perhaps even idolatry! David W. Henderson acknowledges that

current culture is consumer driven and distracted and therefore engaging the audience is

crucial, but he warns that the church must be vigilant against using creativity for the sake

of entertainment alone. He argues that when the service becomes a performance, then the

preacher will become a showman and the content negotiable.[70] Mark Dever concurs, but

is not a proponent of stifling all creativity. He especially encourages creativity in sharing

the gospel, but cautions strongly against becoming reliant on entertainment in weekend

worship services.[71] Even Dan Kimball, an advocate of high congregant participation and

experience, warns against being "so focused on creating cool multi-sensory worship

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[69]Johnson, 4.

[70]David W. Henderson, *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to Our Changing Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 87.

[71]Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005), 55.

services that we end up creating consumers of another kind."[72] Wisdom and discretion

must be used with adding creative elements to a worship service. Great care must be

taken to ensure that the added creative elements enhance the message and bring glory to

God.

Gregory Edward Reynolds is particularly concerned about the use of electronic

media in the church. He fears that if the church embraces this media without clear and

careful study as just another tool for connecting with our members, then perhaps the

gospel will be compromised and moved to a secondary role.[73] He is particularly hard on

Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois.

He asserts that Hybels has rejected much of his Christian Reformed background in order

to provide a church where attendees will not say that church is always "boring,

predictable, and irrelevant." He believes Hybels has turned Willow Creek's services into

a "slick, show-biz service where drama and soft rock are served up on a stage washed in

pink and blue spotlights." He describes the message that follows as a "soft-sell sermon"

that others have labeled as "pop gospel, fast-food theology, McChurch."[74] The issue for

Reynolds is that Hybels claims his message is based on solid Biblical principles and that

only the medium is unorthodox. He wonders then if the unorthodox approach will

deliver orthodox followers of Christ.[75] To him the question is: "What kind of a God are

we communicating?" Is he a majestic sovereign God who uses creative means to connect

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[72]Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 156.

[73]Gregory Edward Reynolds, *The Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures: Preaching in the Electronic Age* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000), 278-279.

[74]Ibid., 284.

[75]Ibid., 284-85.

with people without being forced into a set pattern, or is he "just a psychosociological phenomenon?" Reynolds does not accuse all who practice these methods of being wrongly motivated, but he does believe that they have moved God and his truth to the back burner while making technique king.[76]

Reynolds and other critics raise several points that must be addressed. First, and most importantly, what kind of God are we communicating? A high view of God is essential. The God presented must be the Biblical, sovereign God who spoke all things into existence and offers the opportunity of life change that includes an eternity in His presence. God's message is the life changing message of hope, not the words, agenda, or techniques of any man. A second issue that Reynolds raises is the basis of the message. The message has to be grounded in the Word of God to have any lasting value or impact. The message or sermon or service cannot be driven by what the planners think lost, unchurched people want to hear or might find enjoyable. The message can and should be *sensitive* to "seekers," but not *driven* by what would entertain them. However, this does not rule out the use of creativity, electronic or otherwise, to enhance the preaching of God's word in worship service. Our society has been greatly influenced by electronic media, and preachers must take the effects of that influence into consideration while preparing sermons and services. Reynolds is right that the church must be aware of the effects and influence of electronic media, but neither should the media be discarded as of no value.

Creativity should be used wisely and carefully. Thoughtful consideration and preparation should go into each movie clip, drama, song, illustration, or other element

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[76]Ibid., 285.

deemed valuable to developing an environment in which the audience can truly experience God. Using creativity for the sake of using creativity is not acceptable, nor will it glorify the Lord but creativity carefully worked can glorify the Lord, enhance the worship experience, and deepen the audience's walk with their creator.

Creative Teams

This final section will summarize the biblical and theological findings discovered in the previous two sections and draw conclusions for the concept of a feed-forward creativity team. The theological study of both teams and creativity started with the nature of God. Scripture reveals that our creator is a triune God. The difficult doctrine of the trinity shows us that God is both unified and diverse in His nature. While each person of the Godhead is equal and fully God, each has distinct functions in their relation to the world. The doctrine of the trinity shows us that God is team oriented.

God's nature also reveals that He is creative. He is able to create something new out of nothing and by observing the world around us we can learn the extent of his creative diversity. Research of the nature of two of God's creations, the church and mankind, give insight of His expectations for the behavior and habits of people today. The church is described as a body and is expected to function as one with each part dependant on the other and no one part functioning alone. Each part of the body needs all the other parts working together and contributing in order to function properly. God created man in His image, thus some of God's creative skill and ability is found in man and should be displayed regularly in its various forms. Scripture gives examples of teams, such as the children of Israel rebuilding the wall in the book of Nehemiah, and creativity in the teaching ministry of Jesus.

Based on the nature of God, that He is team oriented and creative, and the nature of the church, that it depends on the input of many parts, and the nature of man, that he is created in the image of God and thus displays that attribute, and because of the supporting examples found in the Bible, I, along with the following experts, advocate the use of a feed-forward creativity team in both the development of a sermon series and with sermon preparation itself. Creativity expert Michael Michalko urges that ways of combining talent should be sought out. He points out that without the stimulation and critique of a group of friends, Einstein, for example, might not have achieved what he did.[77] Pastor Andy Stanley believes the team approach to series planning is beneficial. Not only does it allow for a wider range of thinking, it reduces the creative pressure. He only wishes that he had involved others in the process sooner.[78] Nancy Beach agrees and believes that the team process takes creativity to another dimension.[79] Ed Young Jr., writes that team creativity has changed the quality of his communication.[80] He notes that you still have to labor in the study, but the team effort greatly reduces the stress, allows the message to be more creative than if working alone, and allows the pastor to remain fresh.[81] Young writes that creativity is not a ten letter word, but a four letter word spelled

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[77]Michael Michalko, *Cracking Creativity: The Secrets of Creative Genius* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2001), 136.

[78]Andy Stanley. "Preaching Without Fear: An Interview with Andy Stanley." Interview by Michael Duduit. *Preaching* 20, no. 1 (July-August 2004): 33.

[79]Beach, 176.

[80]Young, Jr. "Preaching Creatively," 56.

[81]Ibid.

"T-E-A-M." In his opinion, creativity must be a team exercise because everyone is creative.[82]

The justification of team creativity can be summed up in the words of Henry James:

> Every man works better when he has companions working in the same line, and yielding to the stimulus of suggestion, comparison, emulation. Great things have of course been done by solitary workers; but they have usually been done with double the pains they would have cost if they had been produced in more genial circumstances.[83]

A properly functioning and enabled feed-forward creativity team has the potential to produce creative, relevant, helpful, and timely biblical messages, and provide the opportunity for more congregational members to use their gifts and talents in a meaningful way. Furthermore, it will free the pastor from the pressure of being the sole person responsible for the planning and development of worship services. The team option provides the congregation the opportunity to be a better steward of time and talents.

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[82]Ed Young, Jr. "Communicating with Creativity" *Preaching* 20, no. 6 (May-June 2005): 12.

[83]In Bennis and Biederman, 6-7.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

This chapter will review books covering current thoughts and trends on the use of teams, creativity, the combination of the two, and the impact of culture and theology on the use of creativity teams in the context of the local church. While many sources were consulted during the research of this project space does not permit discussion to each one.

Teams

When studying teams there is no better place to start than with Pat MacMillan's *The Performance Factor: Unlocking the Secrets of Teamwork*. This sizeable work should be considered an "operator's manual for team design and development." MacMillan has divided his book into three main sections. With the first section, he argues that teams are not passing fads in the business world, but rather display a fundamental shift in how organizations approach work. Teams are necessary, in his view, for an organization to consistently deliver quality, service, and value in an economy that demands product better, faster, cheaper, and with fewer resources. For MacMillan, teams are a means of achieving goals too big and complex to reach through individual efforts. He argues that the purpose of any team is to accomplish an objective and to do so at exceptionally high levels of performance. For MacMillan this means synergy, which is the state in which the output is greater than the sum of the inputs. Synergy is from the Greek word *synergos*, which means "working together." Brian Dodd also use the term "synergy" in *Empowered Church Leadership: Ministry in the Spirit According to Paul*.

This book examines the idea of synergy in the ministry and leadership of the Apostle Paul. Dodd writes that the Christian concept of leadership in the body of Christ must be a theology of "we."[1] It is a team effort. He argues that Paul's partnership theology is indicated in the language he uses as well as by how he refers to his many coworkers. [2] Dodd points out Paul's fondness of the prefix "syn," which means "with" or "co-."[3] Paul also uses the Greek word *synergos*, to describe those working with him. Both MacMillan and Dodd argue that the sum is greater than the combination of the parts. When a group works together in the same direction, the sum of our efforts is far greater than what we could accomplish individually.

According to MacMillan, just calling a group of people a team does not make them a team. For the team to function effectively, MacMillan, in the second section of his book, writes that the team must have six key characteristics in place: common purpose, crystal clear roles, accepted leadership, effective processes, solid relationships, and excellent communication. He feels that even if just one of these characteristics is missing or inadequate, then the team limps at best. He further argues that if two or three of these characteristics is lacking, then this group is probably not a team at all. [4] Stephen A. Macchia agrees that the characteristics of a team must be explored initially for a team to be successful. In *Becoming a Healthy Team: Five Traits of Vital Leadership*, he writes that team members join a team asking basically the same questions: Why am I

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[1] Brian J. Dodd, *Empowered Church Leadership: Ministry in the Spirit According to Paul* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 106.

[2] Ibid., 114.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Pat MacMillan, *The Performance Factor: Unlocking the Secrets of Teamwork* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 30.

here? Why are you here? Whom are we serving and what are their needs? What shall

we do together? How shall we do what we are called to do? When will we know that our

task is complete?[5] Macchia identifies five essential traits or characteristics of a healthy

team, defined around the acrostic TEAMS. The five traits that are the backbone to the

ministry team's health and vitality are trust, empower, assimilate, manage, and serve.

According to Macchia this is what healthy teams do.[6]

MacMillan and Macchia differ somewhat on their definition of team.

MacMillan's definition is addressed to a larger business audience and narrows the

meaning to "A group of people committed to a common purpose who choose to

cooperate in order to achieve exceptional results." The scope of Macchia's definition is

more focused because it is limited to a Christian ministry team. While he concurs with

MacMillan that a team must be formed around a common mission with a goal of

transforming results, he adds attitudinal responsibilities such as accountability, joy, and

desire for God to be glorified as elements of ministry team responsibility.

In the third section of MacMillan's book he offers practical advice for building a

team. He argues that teams are not formed, but built, and provides ten principles of team

development. These principles include: willingness precedes skill, team development

demands a safe environment, team development is a process, not an event, and know

what you are trying to build.[7] For these principles to become a reality a team must be

made up of the correct people. Jim Collins, in *Good to Great: Why Some Companies*

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[5]Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team: 5 Traits of Vital Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 20.

[6]Ibid.

[7]MacMillan, 251-52

Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't, writes that a great vision, or purpose, as MacMillan and Macchia would say, is irrelevant without great people. Collins' research of companies that move from good to great found that the executives who ignited the transformations that led to amazing business results did not first figure out where they wanted to "drive the bus" and then get people to take it there. They started with the right people. These effective executives got the right people on the bus and the wrong people off the bus and then figured out where to drive it.[8] Collins is not saying we should build a team with no purpose in mind. He is saying that the results will be clarified as you surround yourself with high character people and if you have the right people on the team, the problem of how to motivate and manage people largely goes away.

A stirring book on leadership is *Courageous Leadership* by Bill Hybels. It is called his magnum opus by the publishers at Zondervan. This book covers a wide range of leadership issues from the power of vision, to turning vision into action, from decision making to finishing well. But one of the most important topics that Hybels addresses is team building. His idea of a "dream team" is more than just a few people working together. It is a few people doing life deeply with one another as they serve together. He sites the example of Billy Graham's ministry team that has been together nearly fifty years.[9] Hybels writes that the first step in building a "dream team" is to define the purpose of the team.[10] This means answering Macchia's question "Why am I here?" It also meets one of the six key characteristics offered by MacMillan as essential to

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[8]Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap. . . and Others Don't* (New York: Harper Business, 2001), 41.

[9]Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 75.

[10]Ibid., 80.

effective team performance. Hybels stresses that purpose must be defined with ruthless

specificity because this will bring clarity as to what kind of people are needed on the

team.

As noted above, Collins showed that getting the right people on the team and the

wrong people off the team were necessary for setting the team up for success. In

Courageous Leadership, Hybels shows us practical criterion for selecting specific team

members. His selection process is based on three traits he calls the "three Cs." The three

Cs are character, competence, and chemistry and the order is important. [11]   Character is

first in importance to Hybels. He wants to have confidence in the potential team

member's walk with Jesus Christ first and foremost. He is also looking for commitment

to spiritual disciplines and evidence of honesty, teachability, humility, reliability, healthy

work ethic, and a willingness to be entreated.[12] In Ed Young's *The Creative Leader:*

Unleashing the Power of Your Creative Potential, which I will refer to in greater detail

later, the author makes a similar argument regarding team building and character. Young

refers to his process as the "TLC" principle of hiring or team building. He looks to see if

the potential team member is teachable, loyal, and committed.[13] During the character

evaluation both Hybels and Young do extensive background checks before adding a full-

time team member.

The second selection criterion for Hybels is competence. He does not want to fill

a slot with just anybody. He aims high and seeks the person of the highest level of

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[11]Ibid., 80-81.

[12]Ibid., 80-83.

[13]Ed Young, *The Creative Leader: Unleashing the Power of Your Creative Potential* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 152-153.

competence he can find. This includes a superior education as well as refined spiritual gifts.[14] The final criterion that Hybels considers is chemistry. He asks: Will the individual fit relationally with the team? Do they inspire a positive emotional effect on the group? Hybels advises the team leader to keep the selection bar high.[15] Anyone who desires to build a team should know and apply Hybels' three C process.

As Hybels speaks to characteristics necessary to effective team performance, he concurs with MacMillan and Macchia regarding the importance of clear goals. Hybels, however, stresses the importance of the leader in regards to setting the team up for success. He argues that the leader must keep the team focused and on track and figure out what he or she must do to help the team reach its full potential. He adds one more element that MacMillan and Macchia leave out: rewarding achievement or celebrating the wins. Teams need to be rewarded for a job well done. They have to know how they are doing against the goals or targets set for them. Celebrating wins helps encourage and inspire the team to continue its efforts with enthusiasm.[16]

Lack of clarity of purpose as well as a team made up of the wrong people will quickly lead to dysfunction. This is the topic addressed in a negative fashion by Patrick Lencioni in *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. His work provides a lens through which a leader can look to examine why his or her team is not functioning properly. The first dysfunction he points out is absence of trust.[17] Lencioni argues that trust lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team and that without it teamwork is all but impossible.

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[14]Hybels, 83-83.

[15]Ibid., 84-85.

[16]Ibid., 91-92.

[17]Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 188.

Macchia would agree, as noted above, that trust is the first trait in a healthy team in his view. Lencioni writes that absence of trust stems from team members unwillingness to be vulnerable within the group. MacMillan points out that a safe environment is necessary for team development and success. Lencioni stresses the need for trust is vitally important for team cohesion and effectiveness. A team without trust will conceal their weaknesses and mistakes and hesitate to ask for or offer help and thus shoot down the purpose of employing a team in the first place.[18]

The failure to build trust sets the tone for the other four dysfunctions as each one lays the groundwork for the next. Lencioni's second dysfunction is fear of conflict.[19] This dysfunction prevents unfiltered debate around controversial topics. The third dysfunction is lack of commitment.[20] This prevents buy-in to decisions and action plans and thus incompletion of work. The fourth dysfunction is avoidance of accountability, and the fifth is inattention to results.[21] Again, these two dysfunctions, along with the previous three, set the team up for failure and a miserable time at work. MacMillan and Macchia would both agree as all the dysfunctions pointed out by Lencioni violate the key characteristics or traits of a healthy and high performance team.

In *The Power of Team Leadership: Finding Strength in Shared Responsibility*, George Barna makes the case as to why team leadership is effective when used. He argues that our ministry principles and methods should be consistent with the Bible. In

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[18]Ibid., 188, 195-201.

[19]Ibid., 188.

[20]Ibid., 188-89.

[21]Ibid., 189.

addition to Paul, mentioned above as Dodd's example, Barna points out that Jesus,

Moses, David, and Nehemiah all worked with teams. He further supports this from

Ephesians 4 with the view of the priesthood of believers. Agreeing with Dodd and

MacMillan, Barna believes that teamwork creates synergy which will result in greater

ministry impact. Additionally, he sees team efforts offering more innovation and less

stress than a single leader could provide and sustain.[22]

  As with MacMillan, Macchia, and Hybels, Barna offers some suggestions to help

enable high-level team performance. He notes that successful teams are disciplined and

have a narrow focus. This is the consensus of all those mentioned regarding the key for

teams to succeed. They must know what they are to accomplish. Barna further adds that

the goals for the team must be measurable. This will give the team reason to celebrate

and motivation to set new and higher goals for the next project.[23]

  The final book I would like to mention while considering teams is *Organizing*

Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration, by Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward

Biederman. I read this work early in my research and found it extremely insightful,

helpful, and inspiring. Their case studies, which included the stories of Disney, Apple,

Skunk Works, and the Manhattan Project, revealed the tremendous potential that can be

found in brain sharing. They document several examples of how teamwork opened the

door for unimaginable success and accomplishment. Bennis and Biederman make the

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[22]George Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership: Finding Strength in Shared Responsibility* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 73-82.

[23]Ibid., 115-135.

case that "none of us is as smart as all of us" and point out that "in all but the rarest cases, one is too small a number to produce greatness."[24]

In sum, both MacMillan and Macchia provide solid principles for setting up a team for sustainable long-term success. Their insights on what a healthy team looks like are a good place for the team builder to start before putting his or her team together. For a theological perspective, Dodd makes a brief but clear case for teams using the Apostle Paul's ministry as a basis. His thoughts on teamwork are helpful but limited as they are not the central point of the book. Nor is teamwork the focus in Hybels, Collins, or Young's books, but they do provide useful guidelines for building a team. Unfortunately none of the Christian writers make the case for the need of solid theological training for some team members which would bring balance to a team. Perhaps it is assumed on the part of these writers and left unstated. However, more clarity here would assist in helping other leaders set their teams up for success with a good balance between theology and creativity.

Creativity

Regarding creativity, no book provides more description, justification, and application than Howard Hendricks' *Color Outside the Lines: A Revolutionary Approach to Creative Leadership*. He details what creativity is, why and how it should be used, and gives exercises to help facilitate creative thinking. This book is the place to start if you want to understand creativity and begin to implement it into your life and ministry.

Hendricks opens his book by raising three legitimate questions regarding creativity. First he asks: "Who needs it?" Then, "What is it?" and third, "Is it

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[24]Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward Biederman, *Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration* (Cambridge: Perseus Books, 1997), 1, 3.

biblical?"[25] Hendricks understands that nobody will try to be creative if they do not

realize that they need to be. Additionally, they will not consider being creative if they do

not know what it is and if they are in the ministry, they will likely not use creativity if it

is deemed unbiblical. After answering these questions and making his case for the need

and use of creativity, Hendricks explores various kinds of creativity and gives

characteristics of creative people and organizations.

     Part of the beauty of Hendricks' book is that it is more than theoretical; he

provides a tremendous amount of practical application for the person who desires to

become more creative. He proposes a nine-step process to help jump-start creative

thinking. The process introduces creative tools such as storyboarding, mind-mapping,

brainstorming, and thinking hats. Hendricks is convinced that creativity can be learned

and that by implementing creative thinking, one's life can be radically transformed.[26]

     In *The Creative Life: A Workbook for Unearthing the Christian Imagination*,

Alice Bass gives biblical foundation to the use of creative thinking in the Christian's

daily life. Bass would agree with Hendricks that all people have the capacity and ability

to be creative in the various aspects of their lives. Bass argues that creativity is available

to us at all times and the foundation of our access to creativity is our Creator. She points

out that because we are made in the image of God, our creativity and our faith are

intertwined. We live a creative life in response to the Lord Jesus as he is revealed in

Scriptures and by the Holy Spirit. So for Bass, creativity is part of our nature, and we

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[25]Howard G. Hendricks, *Color Outside the Lines: A Revolutionary Approach to Creative Leadership* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 1998), 1, 19, 27.

[26]Ibid., 3-13.

have been given the ability to create.[27] Michael Card could not agree more. In

Scribbling in the Sand: Christ and Creativity, he writes that creativity is not about us

trying to act like little gods trying to create in the same way God creates. Although God

asks us to imitate him, we cannot imitate God in this dimension. According to Card, the

most we can hope for is to respond appropriately and creatively to God, and to Card that

is what creativity is, a worshipful response.[28]

Bass considers her book a workbook, and thus offers probing questions and

exercises to provoke creative thinking by exploring God's Word, journaling in response

to God's Word or creation, imagine and experience in response to God's Word, and

worship God. Our creative journey begins, according to Bass, when we discover not

whether we are creative, but how we are creative. She argues that each one of us has our

own brand of creativity that adds richness to life.[29]

The bottom line for Bass is that being creative is not a method for self-focus, but

an opportunity to live in imitation of Christ. The goal is to live creatively, not to

experience individual creative events. The goal of a creative life is expression, not

perfection.[30]

Card's *Scribbling in the Sand*, is similar to Bass' book in that it also explores the

biblical foundations of Christian creativity. Likewise, he believes our ability to be

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[27]Alice Bass, *The Creative Life: A Workbook for Unearthing the Christian Imagination* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 17-18, 20.

[28]Michael Card, *Scribbling in the Sand: Christ and Creativity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 28.

[29]Bass, 29.

[30]Ibid., 84.

creative comes as the result of our being created in the image of God. For Card, as mentioned above, creativity is an opportunity to respond to God in worship.[31]

In *Can We Do That? 24 Innovative Practices That Will Change The Way You Do Church*, Andy Stanley and Ed Young address the use of creativity in the church setting. From their perspective, creativity is pivotal to building an exciting church that can make a difference in people's lives. They see creativity as something that can bring people in the front door of the church and keep them from exiting the back door.[32] Like Hendricks, Bass, and Card, they base our creativity in the fact that we have been created in the image of God and have been instructed to be imitators of God. In their view, our being creative should be the norm and people should expect churches to be creative and surprised when they are not.[33] Stanley and Young point out two elements that can help services be more creative. The first is change and the second is visuals. They note that people get bored seeing and hearing the same thing each week. Predictability hinders communication. Change, on the other hand, gives a look of freshness and keeps people interested. Stanley and Young are quick to point out that without balance you can lose perspective and have creative overload. They stress that while creativity is important, the Bible must remain the central focus of the weekend service.[34]

In sum, Hendricks provides both a theologically founded basis for the use of creativity and a wealth of useful exercises for stimulating creative thinking. While both

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[31]Card, 28-29.

[32]Andy Stanley and Ed Young, *Can We Do That? 24 Innovative Practices that will Change the Way You Do Church* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing, 2002), 149.

[33]Ibid., 150.

[34]Ibid., 151, 157.

Bass and Card are for the use of creativity and believe it is expected of all humans as image bearers of Christ, their works are thin on both theology and application compared to the work by Hendricks. Likewise, Stanley and Young's comments on creativity are more experienced driven than theologically founded. Thus, Hendricks provides the best starting point for establishing a theology of creativity and the most useful application for implementation.

<div align="center">**Creativity Teams**</div>

Having looked at sources dealing with teams and creativity, I will now review sources that have combined the two. *An Hour On Sunday: Creating Moments of Transformation and Wonder*, by Nancy Beach of Willow Creek Community Church is foundational in describing issues and principles regarding worship service preparation that when applied sets ministry leaders and artists up for success in their working relationships. Additionally, the results can include moments of wonder and awe during the Sunday service that potentially can change people's lives.

Beach agrees with Hendricks, Bass, and Card in that it is a myth that only certain people are blessed with the gift of creativity. She believes that we all can be creative and that we all possess the God-given potential to become more creative. Beach also argues that the aim of the church "should be to create services so compelling, so meaningful, and so unexpected, that the time sails by and attenders leave with an enthusiastic desire to talk about their experience as well as the content of the service."[35] Both developing individual creativity and creating meaningful services can be challenging. Beach notes that many organizations expect creativity at an unsustainable pace. Here she proposes

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[35]Nancy Beach, *An Hour on Sunday: Creating Moments of Transformation and Wonder* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 167-68.

team creativity as a solution. She sees team creativity as one of the most precious

commodities any church has.[36] Ed Young learned this first-hand. In *The Creative*

Leader: Unleashing the Power of Your Creative Potential, he writes that no matter how

creative an individual is, eventually they will run out of steam and ideas if they continue

to try to do everything themselves. Ultimately, they will become the creative bottleneck

in the organization. He discovered that one of the best ways to ensure longevity in the

ministry is by enlisting a creative team to help shoulder the creative workload.[37]

Young has identified several benefits as the result of implementing a creativity

team. Among them is it sustains a fresh flow of ideas, it alleviates your stress of knowing

you have to come up with every idea each week, and it expands your knowledge of your

audience.[38] Both Young and Beach agree that working with a creativity team makes

doing ministry more fun. Laughter leads to truly creative ideas, so they advise, have

fun![39]

The book on team creativity that was the most helpful was *When Sparks Fly:*

Igniting Creativity in Groups by Dorothy A. Leonard and Walter C. Swap. This is a

secular book written primarily for business teams. While this book does address what

creativity is and uncovers several myths about creativity, it is ultimately "about a creative

process that leads to a potentially novel, useful solution or process or product."[40] In their

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[36]Ibid., 180.

[37]Young, 173.

[38]Ibid., 176-77, 180.

[39]Beach, 177.

[40]Dorothy Leonard and Walter Swap, *When Sparks Fly: Igniting Creativity in Groups* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999), 7.

view, the basic process of creativity is the same regardless of the size of your organization. They argue for team creativity versus individual creativity because groups have a potential advantage of tapping into multiple reservoirs of deep expertise. They believe two or more heads are better than one, provided there is useful knowledge inside the heads, that all useful knowledge can be accessed, and that accessed, useful knowledge can be shared, processed, and synthesized by the group.[41]

Leonard and Swap agree with Beach and Young that team creativity is often fun. But they add that anytime people and creativity are involved the process will be challenging.   They offer a five step process to help facilitate creativity.[42] The first step in Leonard and Swap's process is "preparation."[43] This includes selecting team members who can help the group maximize creativity. The potential team members must be able to trust the other members, be open to conflict, and committed to group results, as Lencioni proposes are necessary for a team to be functional. Leonard and Swap argue that true innovative breakthroughs follow spirited debating and bantering that they dub "creative abrasion." The second step is called "innovation opportunity."[44] In this step the problem that requires creative solutions is identified. The third step in the process is "generation of options."[45] This step promotes divergent thinking and suggests the use of multiple tools such as role playing, mind-mapping, and brainstorming. Hendricks, Beach and Young all agree that brainstorming and similar activities are necessary to jumpstart

[41]Ibid., 10.

[42]Ibid., 9.

[43]Ibid., 9-10.

[44]Ibid., 10-12.

[45]Ibid., 12.

creative thinking. The fourth step in Leonard and Swap's process is "incubation."[46] This step allows time for the team to chew on ideas and consider their options. The fifth and final step is "convergence on one option."[47] In this step, the team must move from many options to one innovation. Leonard and Swap acknowledge that the creative process is not as linear as their list implies, and that within any step, a smaller cycle of some or all the five steps can occur.[48]

In addition to proposing a creative process and considering how to compose and manage a group for creativity, Leonard and Swap examine where the creative process takes place. Two key environments are considered, physical and psychological. They provide guidance on how to design physical surroundings and the culture of the organization so as to build a creative ecology into the organization. Beginning with the physical environment, the authors argue that the architecture, acoustics, and even the furniture can support or inhibit creativity. The wrong kinds of surroundings drain energy and become barriers to the creative process.[49] Likewise, Nancy Beach stresses location. She thinks where a creative team meets matters. Windowless rooms with uncomfortable furniture and poor decorations do not set a creativity team up for brainstorming success. Beach suggests even changing meeting locations from time to time and recommends trying a local restaurant, private home, or going outside.[50] Community Christian Church and Pastor Dave Ferguson understand this idea, and as Ferguson reveals in *The Big Idea*,

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[46]Ibid., 12-13.

[47]Ibid., 13, 17.

[48]Ibid., 17.

[49]Ibid., 136.

[50]Beach, 177.

environment and proximity make a difference. The Community Christian Church staff

places most of their workstations where they face each other with no barriers. This setup

allows for increased interaction and brainstorming among team members during non-

meeting times.[51] This type of environment could result in what Leonard and Swap site as

"drive-by idea snatching."[52] Physical environments such as workspace can encourage or

inhibit creativity.

In addition to physical environments, Leonard and Swap believe designing

psychological environment conducive to creativity is important. The successful

psychological environment allows room for failure. Beach notes that there is no learning

without failure.[53] Leonard and Sway write that team leaders must understand that

intelligent failures can lead to the desired breakthrough.[54] A second factor necessary in

insuring a psychological environment conducive to creativity is open communication.[55]

Team members have to feel like they have been heard and that their contributions are

worth listening to. MacMillan and Lencioni argue that open and excellent

communication is necessary for a team to be successful, so Leonard and Swap's thought

makes sense when concerning a creativity team. A third and perhaps the most crucial

way to ensure an effective psychological environment conducive to creativity is to

promote passion among the team members. This can be done, according to Leonard and

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[51]Dave Ferguson, Jon Ferguson and Eric Bramlett, *The Big Idea: Focus the Message—Multiply the Impact* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 123-127.

[52]Leonard and Swap, 152.

[53]Beach, 180-181.

[54]Leonard and Swap, 168-171.

[55]Ibid., 171.

Swap, by setting difficult but attainable goals, granting the team some autonomy, and by creating a climate of optimism and confidence in the future.[56]

Beach, Young, and Leonard and Swap have given great insights as to the value of creative teams as well as some key tips for setting them up for success. For practical insight in how to prepare for and run a creative team meeting, Dave Ferguson gives some structure and guidelines in *The Big Idea: Focus the Message—Multiply the Impact*. Ferguson believes that creativity can be both planned and spontaneous, but that planning allows for more creativity and more spontaneity. Under Ferguson's leadership his church has two regular meetings pertaining to the weekend worship service. One deals exclusively with the creative elements of a weekend service and the other deals exclusively with the teaching of the weekend service. Both meetings have clear objectives and timelines. Those involved in the teams have assignments and responsibilities before, during, and after the meetings. The duties outside the meeting time are necessary to insure a successful and productive meeting. The teaching team meeting, for example, only lasts 105 minutes. If key team members come to the meeting unprepared, the chance for a successful meeting diminishes. A successful and effective creativity team must be well organized with expectations clearly stated, disciplined, and flexible. Out of that structure creativity can occur.[57]

In sum, Leonard and Swap's book is the place to begin when considering creativity teams. By introducing a process for generating creativity they offer more than theory. While Beach and Young are clearly in favor of using creativity teams and offer

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[56]Ibid., 177, 204.

[57]Ferguson, Ferguson and Bramlett, 75-79, 148.

several benefits of using them, they offer little practical guidance for actually

implementing a creativity team. However, Ferguson does briefly offer a few ways that

creativity teams can be managed and structured for success if applied.

Culture and Concern

After looking at the sources related to the heart of this project, teams and

creativity, I will briefly considers books that deal with our culture and books that offer

concerns regarding the use of creativity in worship services. When considering modern

culture, several books helped give understanding as to what the modern pastor is up

against. Timothy Turner's *Preaching to Programmed People: Effective Communication*

in a Media-Saturated Society and Gregory Edward Reynolds' *The Word is Worth a*

Thousand Pictures: Preaching in the Electronic Age write of the great impact that TV

and other media sources have had on present and future congregation members. Both

argue that considerations must be taken into account when preparing sermons for the

modern audience. Turner's book is divided into two main sections. In the first section he

evaluates what TV has done to preaching. In the second section he provides practical

insights for effective preaching in the TV influenced culture. He does not considering

using these insights as being creative, but that is the essence of his advice when he

encourages preachers to avoid what he calls "unpardonable sins."[58] They are immobility

in delivery, imageless words for illustrations, and abstract content unrelated to real life.

According to Turner, the preacher must be mobile to hold the audience's attention

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[58]Timothy A. Turner, *Preaching to programmed People: Effective Communication in a Media-Saturated Society* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1995), 90.

because the average scene change during primetime TV is every 3.7 seconds.[59] He says

moving objects generate attention and it can be done by walking or gesturing. Turner

stresses the need for using picturesque language as well as relevant subject matter when

preaching. Media-Relevant preaching can be achieved by addressing TV issues with a

biblical response.

     Reynolds' lengthy book builds toward what he calls a Christian media "ecology"

and an ecology of preaching. He is not naïve to the fact that the electronic revolution is

here to stay, but is concerned about how it will impact genuine worship in the church

setting. Reynolds certainly does not want the church to compromise its core message just

to reach and please non-believing sinners who have no idea what they need in a church.

He argues that the church service should not focus on what the congregation wants.

Worship is a response to God and should focus on what he wants.[60] Mark Dever and

Paul Alexander tend to agree with Reynolds in *The Deliberate Church: Building Your*

Ministry on the Gospel. In this useful book on ecclesiology the authors raise concerns

that many American churches have used entertainment-based methods in evangelism.

Dever and Alexander are not making a case to remove all forms and use of creativity in

presenting the gospel in an understandable or provocative way, but are concerned about

some potentially harmful side effects.   They indicate that what you win people with is

likely what you'll win them to. If you win them with entertainment, then they will be

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[59]Ibid.

[60]Gregory Edward Reynolds, *The Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures: Preaching in the Electronic Age* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000), 292.

won to the show and not the gospel message.[61] Neither Dever, Alexander, nor Reynolds

are opposed to creativity, but they do warn against relying on it solely for reaching

people.

Finally, two books that gave me insights on what younger believers, the target

audience of my church, expect from a church worship service were Robert Webber's *The*

Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World and Dan Kimball's *The*

Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations. Both books reveal that

younger evangelicals are highly visual, communicate through stories, long for

community, demand authenticity, and have a great appreciation for the arts. Importantly,

they do not want to be sidelined, they want to be a part; they want to be involved and be

allowed to participate in the worship service. They desire to be part of an experiential

journey together with others. These insights, along with the discoveries of Turner and

Reynolds certainly make it challenging for an individual pastor to provide a life-changing

worship experience week after week. Developing a creativity team is certainly an aid.

Again, these are just a few of the books used in the research of this project. They

provided an insightful basis in the area of teams, creativity, creativity teams, and culture

that formed foundational knowledge for the scope of this project.

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[61]Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 54-55.

Chapter 4

Project Design

Having introduced the problem and its setting for this project, established its biblical and theological framework, and discussed key resources in the literature review, I will now explain the process of my research specifically in regard to how the local church can be equipped to develop and enable a feed-forward creativity team to enhance corporate worship. The type of research utilized was evaluative. I accomplished this by creating a training manual to provide clear steps to achieve this goal. This chapter shows my research methods and thought process while developing a creativity team training manual. The chapter concludes with an explanation of how the field-tested training manual was evaluated.

Path toward a Creativity Team

As a church planter and pastor of a local church, my interest in this topic initially developed out of personal need. I was the only staff member for the church plant and everything involving the church, including the weekend service, was my responsibility. As the church grew, the demands started to become overwhelming, and it became more difficult to fulfill all my duties as well as have timely, relevant, and creative weekend worship services. At this point I began to look for answers.

About this same time a second circumstance occurred. Members from our congregation began asking me questions such as what I thought of team teaching, and

could they help in any way with the weekend services? At first, to be honest, I was
skeptical but curious about the people's motivations. After all, I was the pastor, and I
was not sure I wanted to relinquish any of my duties no matter how stressed I currently
was. Nonetheless, I agreed to give it some thought and prayer, which I did, but I also
began doing some research and asking questions of my own.

I started my preliminary research by reading some books and articles on the topics
of team leadership, creativity, and creativity teams. I also began asking pastors what
their thoughts were on teams and creativity and using them in a church setting. I wanted
to know what other churches were doing, how they were doing it, and if it was
sustainable. As noted in chapter 1 the results were mixed. The majority of the churches
did not use team teaching or creativity. At this point, my thought was that there may be
an opportunity here to help both the pastor and the church, but I was not yet ready to
implement a creativity team based on my early findings. I wanted more information.

During this time I began my first residency at Gordon-Conwell Theological
Seminary. For my first post-residency project I decided to experiment with the idea of a
feed-forward creativity team and see if it could work and benefit our church. The results
of the project, both favorable and problematic, peaked my interest to learn more about the
potential of creativity teams. I was not yet convinced. I wanted to know if the basis of
creativity teams was biblical. At that point I turned to the Bible to see what God had to
say, because it is our starting place for faith and practice.

Foundational Findings

The next step in my research of this topic was to do a biblical and theological
analysis of teams and creativity. My goal was to discover if principles could be found

that would encourage or prohibit the use of either or both. The results of this research are noted in chapter 2. Several key areas of focus should be reiterated here as they directed my path of study as I pursued the development and enablement of a feed-forward creativity team. The first area of focus was the nature of God in his triune form. The doctrine of the Trinity shows that the Godhead reflects unity and diversity, and all three persons have different primary functions in relating to the world. In short, I was examining the godhead to see if they function as a team.

A second key area of focus was the nature of God's body, the church. Here I examined how God made up the church to determine its purpose and function. I specifically looked at individual giftedness and how the gifts were deployed throughout the church. I sought to learn if the gifts are tools and if believers have all the gifts. I sought to learn the responsibility of each gifted member to the church and if each member must depend on all the other members to enjoy the full range of gifts. In other words, if one member neglects his or her role and refuses to utilize his or her gift, would the entire church be adversely affected. Can it be determined that a church is to function like a team, and as with all teams, success depends on every teammate being engaged and prepared to contribute?

After studying the nature of God as triune and the nature of the church as God's body, I searched the Bible for examples of teamwork. My concern was to see if there were practical biblical examples of teamwork in action and if so, what were the results? If teamwork was modeled in Scripture, but the outcomes disastrous, I would not desire to pursue the project further. I wanted confirmation that using teams would prove beneficial both to me and those on the team. I discovered that the Bible provides multiple examples

of how teamwork made a great impact in the lives of those who utilized it. Again, these examples are detailed in chapter 2 and include the story of Moses sharing his workload, the story of Nehemiah organizing a team to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, and both Jesus and Paul doing ministry as a team.

Satisfied that principles from the Bible support the use of teamwork, I turned my research to the biblical and theological analysis of creativity. While the use of creativity can be fun and exciting, I wanted assurance that it was biblical and that I would not be leading the church in a direction that uses creativity for mere entertainment or as a gimmick to draw and wow crowds. As with my study of teams, the results of this research are documented in chapter 2. Again, as with teams, several key areas of focus should be reiterated. The first key area of focus to recall regarding creativity was the nature of God. In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, it is found that God is a creative God. Further in the book of Genesis a second important learning is discovered. In 1:26 it tells us that humanity has been created in the image and likeness of God and this makes us unique from all his other creations. This information led me to consider that since God is creative and has created man in his image and likeness, does man have the ability and responsibility to be creative as well?

Turning to the New Testament I studied two passages in the book of Ephesians. The first was 2:10 which informs us that we have been created in Christ Jesus to do good works. So humanity is to be active like its creator. The second passage was 5:1 where believers are encouraged to be imitators of God. I found that the language here means "copier" and in this context refers primarily imitating God by loving others, but

wondered if imitating God in being creative could be included in what it means to "copy God."

This led me to search for specific biblical examples of creativity in practice. One example was the story of Bezalel and Oholiab in Exodus 35. Both of these men were able to use their God-given creative abilities to supervise and implement the building plan for the tabernacle. I learned that using our creative abilities was to be the norm not the exception in our Christian walk. A second example I researched in regards to the use of creativity in teaching was Jesus Christ. I found that he regularly involved creativity, spontaneity, and visual aids in his lessons and by doing so was able to connect with his audience.

Written Opinions

After searching for biblical support for the use of teams and creativity I was interested in its practical implementation for today in the local church. As a result, I started considering what secular and Christian authors thought of teams and creativity. These findings are detailed in chapter 3. As noted there I considered sources that address team issues, creativity, as well as the use and development of creativity teams. I was concerned with how to develop and manage a creativity team so that it would be set up for success. My assumption at this point was that managing creative people would be difficult and potentially time consuming. Therefore, I looked specifically for thoughts on creative teams and processes for setting up their meeting times for success. I searched for thoughts from current church leaders who employ a creativity team or are part of one for their views of its effectiveness and usefulness. I was seeking information that would

reveal the benefit of the creativity team to the pastor, potential team members, and the overall church.

I examined the creative process to see if there was a certain order or structured approach that, if followed, would help facilitate creativity and set the creativity team up for optimal success. I was seeking to learn if creativity could be planned with an agenda, or did it occur spontaneously in a free-flowing arena. During this phase of research I also considered the various environments that the team would be working in, and I sought to learn if they mattered to the success of the team's performance. Two environments that were studied were physical and psychological. Finding that both mattered, I looked for ways that both could be developed and enhanced.

After researching teams and creativity, the heart of this project, I briefly examined the modern culture and the impact of electronic media on the local church. I was curious about the effects of TV on the attention spans of the congregation as well as the effects and implications of bringing media and technology into the church setting. Regarding modern culture, I was particularly interested in what younger evangelicals, which primarily make up the congregation that I pastor, believe and expect from church. I sought to learn if they wanted to be part of the process of developing the service or if they were satisfied just sitting back and watching. Furthermore, I wanted to know what they valued and if visuals, drama, community, and authenticity were important to them. These answers would help me discover if a creativity team would be necessary and useful.

Additional Insights

Following my biblical and foundational research, I turned to some of the key leaders of Holland Community Church for their input. At this point in the process I was

asking them to check my blind spots to ensure I was not missing something biblically or theologically. In an hour long session I presented the need for developing and enabling a feed-forward creativity team in the local church and explained the findings from my biblical and theological research. I gained their initial feedback via emailed responses to a questionnaire. Feedback continued with these leaders through multiple informal discussions in which we wrestled with the premise of my thesis and discussed teams and creativity in light of the nature of God and the stories found in the Bible. These discussions led to the beginnings of our own creativity team. We began to practice some of the principles I had discovered to get a sense if they would work long-term. The early attempt of a feed-forward creativity team usually consisted of brainstorming sessions I held with two other members of Holland Community Church. These early sessions typically involved me introducing a potential series topic, along with a few key Scripture verses which served as a springboard for discussions that would hopefully end with some creative elements that would make the messages relevant and memorable. These discussions often included a spiritual assessment of our congregation. Specific members and their current circumstances would be considered and thought given as to how a worship service or message could address their various needs. From these early meetings we developed an action task list to be tracked in an excel spreadsheet. We were beginning to realize that timing and advance planning would be vital to the success of the creativity team.

Input from key leaders of Holland Community Church also included the potential hazards and benefits of using creativity in a church setting. We discussed what creativity is and is it necessary to connect with our current culture to remain relevant and effective.

More importantly, we weighed it biblically to make sure the use of creativity lined up with Scripture. We thought through the possibility of putting certain guidelines in place to ensure that creativity does not become too showy or a distraction. The purpose of these guidelines, which were not documented at this point, but understood, were to give us pause for reflection before actually implementing a creative piece into a service. The guidelines include thought provoking questions such as: "Does the creative element set up the big idea of the message?" The guidelines also exclude clips from R-rated movies and songs with inappropriate lyrics. The goal of adding creative elements is to create an environment where one can truly experience God, not one that distracts or glorifies man. Additionally, we considered how to respond to those in the congregation who might object to the regular use of creativity in our worship services. This was addressed by establishing the careful use of creativity as part of our ministry philosophy and by introducing it in a sermon series on values. Finally, we discussed whether or not combining teams and creativity makes sense and benefits the entire church.

Following my personal research and the input from key leaders of Holland Community Church, I developed a training manual for developing and enabling a feed-forward creativity team in the local church. The training manual can be found in Appendix 2. The purpose of the training manual is to provide local churches the justification for a creativity team along with some practical how-to steps for starting and managing one. The manual includes establishing the need for a creativity team, definitions of key terms, biblical and theological support for the use of a creativity team, and it addresses some concerns about the use of creativity in the local church. Next, the training manual offers a practical guide for forming and enabling a creativity team. Here

the manual addresses pre-team preparation issues such as guidelines for team member selection, developing the scope and goals for the team. It also warns of pitfalls to avoid. The final section of the training manual provides process steps for how a team can function during their meeting time and tips for making the team successful and sustainable.

Field Test Feedback

After completing the training manual, I "field-tested" it and sought input as to its effectiveness and usefulness. My evaluation occurred in three stages: first, I provided personal reaction as the one who created and presented the material. Next, I gained feedback via questionnaires from several local church leaders as to their thoughts regarding the effectiveness and usefulness of the training manual in the local church setting. Finally, I sought the feedback and reactions of three "experts" in the area of team creativity. I desired their thoughts as to the potential effectiveness of the training manual to the universal church audience.

Based on my experience of presenting the material using the training manual, I provided the initial evaluation myself. I was seeking to determine if the content was cohesive and if each section transitioned easily to the next. To do this, I made arrangements with several local church leaders to present my research to them using the training manual I developed. This would allow me to gain first-hand experience of the effectiveness of the training manual from a teacher's perspective. In a classroom setting I took eight church leaders from four local churches through the manual. I did not record my reactions via a questionnaire, as in the other two stages, but simply offered my

reactions and learnings in chapter 5 based on my experience of teaching the material. My comments are driven by how I thought the material flowed while teaching the manual.

The manual itself is divided into three primary sections. They are: defining key terms, providing a theological basis, and the development and maintenance of a feed-forward creativity team. I considered how each section flowed from the teacher's perspective. I wanted to determine the manual was easy to follow and use while teaching. Additionally, I was seeking to find out if the teaching of the material brought clarity to the subject or doubt. This was to be ascertained by the faces of the students, as well as the questions they posed during the presentation. Finally, I desired to discover if the material effectively convinced others that developing and implementing a feed-forward creativity team is possible and potentially helpful to their church. The next chapter summarizes my discoveries.

The second stage of evaluation came from those attending the presentation of the training manual. Again, this group was made up of eight people from four churches and included two senior pastors, a creative arts director, a minister of evangelism, an associate pastor of worship, a discipleship pastor, a minister of college and singles, and a summer intern worker. This stage provided the most feedback. As this group composed the live field-test, their feedback included verbal, non-verbal, and written. The verbal feedback took place in the form of comments and questions before, during, and after the presentation. These comments provided immediate insights on areas of the teaching that were unclear or thought provoking to them. A summary of their feedback is provided in the next chapter.

The written feedback was provided immediately following the presentation as time was given for the completion of a fifteen question evaluation. The manual evaluation questions can be found in Appendix 3. Twelve of the questions had a scale range of one to ten and were designed to determine how useful, helpful, or convincing certain sections of the training manual were. Three of the questions were open discussion questions whose purpose was to allow the ministry leader to express broader opinions of the effectiveness of the training manual. The desired outcome of the feedback provided on the questionnaire was to give me insight as to the effectiveness of the training manual for setting up ministry leaders for success should they desire to develop and implement a feed-forward creativity team at their churches. The feedback and results from these eight local church leaders are summarized in the next chapter.

The third stage of feedback was provided by three people with extensive experience in the area of team creativity. Of this group of three, one is a senior pastor currently working on his Doctor of Ministry thesis on a topic related to this one, the second is an Associate Pastor of Worship Arts at a mega-church in Massachusetts, and the third is a Program Director for a progressive church in Oregon. My purpose for seeking this outside opinion was to gain their thoughts as to the potential effectiveness of the training manual to the broader church audience. After gaining their approval to provide feedback on the training manual via email, I mailed the training manual, along with the same evaluation form completed by those who participated in the field-test. Here I wanted expert analysis as to the usefulness, clarity, balance, and potential of the training manual to church leaders. With this group, I was hopeful that the open-ended discussion questions would provoke them to honestly express their opinions on the

strengths and weakness of the training manual. As with the feedback and results of the local church leaders, the insights gained from these outside experts are summarized in the next chapter.

The time spent researching this topic was interesting and insightful and in my opinion worth while. The overall results, conclusions, learnings and recommendations reached during the "field-test" and received from the manual evaluation questions are detailed further in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Outcomes

Having now addressed the problem and its setting for this project, established its biblical and theological framework, discussed key resources in the literature review, and having reviewed the research methodology, I will now reveal the outcomes of this thesis project. This thesis set out asking the question: How can the local church develop and enable a feed-forward creativity team to enhance corporate worship? My hypothesis was that teamwork in the local church is biblically expected, and by empowering members of the congregation to use their unique gifts and talents in creative ways in the worship service development process, a more compelling, memorable, and life-changing worship service will result. The research has demonstrated that the carefully directed creativity team can be a positive addition to the local church, but not without some concerns which will be pointed out as I describe the results below.

I will evaluate the outcomes of this research and recommend how the lessons learned can be used to help a local church develop and enable a feed-forward creativity team. The lessons learned will be organized under five categories: lessons from research, lessons from feedback, personal ministry impact, application to the church, and changes for the future.

Lessons from Research

This section does not detail all the lessons learned while researching for this project, but points out those which proved significant and if applied can aid the local church in developing and enabling a feed-forward creativity team. The initial outcomes were discovered during the background phase of the research for this project. It was here that I learned two key lessons. Lesson 1: Pastors must enlist help from their congregations. Pastors receive little help planning weekend services or messages. I made a brief phone survey and consulted several sources to determine the workload for the typical pastor of a local church. The phone survey surprisingly revealed how little outside help the pastor seeks or receives from those in his or her congregation. The pastors in the majority of the churches surveyed consult only one other person, typically the music minister, in worship service planning. Regarding the workload of the typical pastor it was not surprising to find that he or she has a wide variety of responsibilities to manage. What was surprising was the wide variant of man hours spent in sermon preparation. The various averages ranged from a minimum of two hours per message to a maximum of thirty hours per message. Because of the variety of tasks that must fit into the typical pastor's workweek there is only a set amount of time that he or she can dedicate toward sermon preparation; over time this creates the likelihood that the pastor will become a creative bottleneck in both service and sermon planning.

Another discovery during the initial research relates to the target audience of the church in which I currently serve. Known as "post-moderns" this new generation, dubbed "the younger evangelicals" by Robert Webber, has a different perspective on worship than do previous generations. Lesson 2: The church must reach, connect with

and involve the younger generations. The post-modern generation, for example, wants to be involved. I found that this group does not want to be passively entertained but desires to be involved. They additionally seek substance over show. They want to be a part of something that is genuine and real. For people of this generation to find satisfaction and contentment in their Sunday morning worship experience, ways to include and involve them must be explored.

The next area that revealed lessons that can benefit the local church in developing and enabling a feed-forward creativity team was found while considering a biblical and theological framework for feed-forward creativity teams. As with the background research findings, the discoveries here were interesting. By examining the nature of God's body, the church, I found lesson three: The church must realize the value of every member and that each member adds unique, irreplaceable value. God designed church members to be interdependent with one another. Jesus Christ who builds the church grants each believer at least one gift, but not all the gifts. To have the benefit of all the gifts available, one must be connected to a church where all the members are active and using their giftedness. My research reminded me that for the church to be successful it must function like a team with every teammate engaged and prepared to contribute. Biblical examples of teamwork in action, such as Moses' delegation of tasks, Nehemiah's rebuilding of the wall, and Paul's extensive missionary ministry reveal that God did not make us to work in isolation. He designed us for teamwork and community. We are to do life together.

My continued theological and biblical research led to lesson 4: We can be creative because God is creative. The Bible tells us that God is our creative creator and

that we have been made in his image. This was not new to me, but the application was different. As a result of our being created by God in his image, we have the ability to be creative as well. I learned that being creative was a possibility for all of mankind, not just a gifted few. Several examples of creativity in action, including Jesus himself while he was teaching, led me to realize that God understands what many communicators are only recently discovering, that lessons are more memorable when creative elements are tied to it.

Turning from Scripture to cultural views, my findings in Scripture were confirmed by both Christian and secular authors. Again, applying these lessons can set up the local church to successfully develop and enable a feed-forward creativity team. Lesson 5: Successful teams are made up of a small group of people, formed around a common purpose, and given clear performance goals. Findings regarding teams were consistent with the argument that teamwork provides synergy, which is the idea that when multiple people work in the same direction, they can accomplish more than the sum of individual efforts.[1] One author noted that "none of us is as smart as all of us" and that "in all but the rarest cases, one is too small a number to produce greatness."[2] I also learned that the idea of team leadership is not unprecedented in current thought. Many churches now employ and promote a team approach in ministry. However, I learned that while a team approach can potentially have high upside; carelessness in forming the team can lead to disaster and actually make ministry matters worse. I discovered that clear

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[1]Brian J. Dodd, *Empowered Church Leadership: Ministry in the Spirit According to Paul* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 105.

[2]Warren Bennis and Patricia Ward Biederman, *Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books, 1997), 1, 3.

guidelines and expectations are necessary and must be in place for a team to be set up for success. This leads to the next lesson.

Lesson 6: Pastors must carefully select team members. Team makeup is important. Jim Collins, in *Good to Great*, stresses the importance of selecting the right people for the team. He uses the language of "getting the right people on the bus."[3] Collins further argues that it is not enough just to get the right people on the bus, but that they must get placed in the right seat on the bus to be truly effective.[4] Along the same topic, both Bill Hybels and Ed Young, Jr. provide some tips for selecting the right team members. Hybels, in *Courageous Leadership*, offers what he calls the "three Cs" as a guide for team member selection: character, competence, and chemistry.[5] Similarly, Ed Young Jr. offers his "TLC" principle for building a team in *The Creative Leader*. The "TLC" stands for teachable, loyal, and committed. Learning and implementing the practical tips offers by these authors has proved valuable in the team building process at my church.

Lesson 7: Creativity should be used with much discretion. Not everybody thinks creativity should be used in a church worship service. While studying creativity I found both proponents who are excited about the potential benefits of using creativity and those who are leery of its use in a church setting. Those who see the upside argue that creativity can attract new members and help them stay connected. Furthermore,

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[3]Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap. . . and Others Don't* (New York: Harper Business, 2001), 41.

[4]Ibid.

[5] Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 80-81.

creativity can infect the pastor's message with freshness and vitality which can help

create a compelling and memorable service that can change the lives of listeners.

Those who are more apprehensive about using creativity in a worship service pose

valid concerns that should be carefully considered. First, I found that those with concerns

are not totally opposed to the use of creativity, but they are very concerned of it

becoming the central focus of a service and thus distracting the audience from

meaningful worship of God. I found that critics were further concerned that if creativity

is used for entertainment alone that the service would become a performance, the

preacher a showman and the content negotiable.[6] When considering the views of those

less enthusiastic toward the use creativity in a worship service I found their plea to be that

of caution and wisdom should be used before implementing it. They further warn that the

pastor should not become dependent or reliant on creativity. I found this advice credible,

valid, and useful. Again, creativity should be used with much discretion.

Lesson 8: Creativity can be generated and managed. Dorothy Leonard and

Walter Swap in their book, *When Sparks Fly*, provide definitions on both creativity and

creativity team, common myths regarding creativity, and of most value a five step

process to help facilitate creativity.[7] With this process I learned that creativity can be

controlled, organized, and managed. I used Leonard and Swap's process as the key steps

for making the creative process happen in the context of a team in the local church.

Howard Hendricks, in *Color Outside the Lines*, provides a definition of creativity, the

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[6]David W. Henderson, *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to Our Changing Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 87.

[7] Dorothy Leonard and Walter Swap, *When Sparks Fly: Igniting Creativity in Groups* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999), 2, 4, 6, 9.

need for creativity, a brief biblical theology of creativity, but of most value he provides many practical exercises for being creative.[8] These exercises, many of which I encountered for the first time in this book, provide starting points for looking at various problems creatively.

Lessons from Feedback

Having detailed the key lessons learned from the research aspect of this project, I will now document the feedback gained on the training manual that I developed as the application portion of this research project. I will cite lessons learned that will assist me in understanding the needs and challenges local church leaders face in developing and enabling a feed-forward creativity team. The purpose of the training manual is to provide church leaders a "how to" tool to develop and enable a feed-forward creativity team. The development of the training manual itself is discussed in chapter 4, so the information in this section will be limited to the outcomes discovered based on the evaluations received on the training manual. The feedback received on the manual is based on three sources of data. The first will be a personal evaluation from my perspective as the one who developed and taught the material using the manual. The next source of feedback was generated from eight local church leaders who were taught the material using the training manual and responded by completing a fifteen question evaluation form. The evaluation questions can be found in Appendix 3. The final source of feedback was generated from three outside "experts" on the subject of team creativity in the context of church. The

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[8]Howard G. Hendricks, *Color Outside the Lines: A Revolutionary Approach to Creative Leadership* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 1998), 1, 19, 27, 109-164.

three sources of feedback provided substantial insights and learnings that can not only help the local church, but make the training manual a more effective tool.

The feedback on the training manual starts with my personal perspective. Beginning with the introduction, which addresses both overview and need, I learned that that this could have been more concise. The dense amount of content in this section could have flowed more easily by breaking the information into bullet points. The next section, however, which defined the key terms, was much more concise and flowed more easily from the teacher's perspective. The bracketed information made the material easy to cite and interact with while teaching.

The section that argued for the theological basis of teams, creativity, and creativity teams was very dense with information, which is fine, but it made it a bit cumbersome to teach. The layout made it difficult to insure key content was taught while maintaining good eye contact with the students. The content was good, but it could have been broken up in a more digestible fashion. Additionally, the examples given in outline form could have been expounded upon to bring more clarity to the various points being made.

The next section of the training manual addressed how to develop a creativity team. This is the heart of the training manual. While the training manual does provide a basic outline as how to develop and implement a feed-forward creativity team, to be the main focus of the training manual, it is a little too thin on content and personal examples. The number of questions raised by the class during this section made the need for more detail obvious. While I was able to provide additional content and examples from my church's experience into the oral teaching for the benefit of the students, the manual itself

does not go far enough to explain the creative process. The same can be said for the section that deals with keeping the feed-forward creativity team going. By teaching this manual I learned that by expanding these final two sections the training manual would be more effective in setting up local church leaders for success when using this manual for developing and enabling a feed-forward creativity team.

The next source of feedback was provided by local church leaders who sat under my teaching of the training manual and then completed a fifteen question evaluation form. Twelve of the questions called for responses ranging on a scale from one to ten and the other three questions were open-ended with space provided for comments. These questions can be found in Appendix 3. Here is what was reported in their evaluation forms, which overall were very generous. In regard to the overall usefulness and helpfulness of the training manual to their specific church the scores averaged over nine. The local leaders found the order and flow of the manual logical and easy to follow with the average rating nearly 9.4. They also found the explanation of key terms clear with the rating again well over nine. In terms of the argument for theological basis for both teams and creativity, these church leaders found the case for both very convincing with the ratings for both just over nine. They also found the manual provided balance by including concerns for the use of creativity in a church context. The average rating here was 9.25. Regarding the process for developing a creativity team and the amount of information provided to implement a creativity team were rated to be clear and adequate with the average rating over eight. These local church leaders did not find the multiple quote boxes distracting and indicated that the manual's graphics somewhat enhanced it. The feedback to the training manual through these questions gave some insights as to the

effectiveness of the manual, but the three open-ended questions provided more useful feedback.

The first of these open-ended questions sought the greatest strengths of the manual. Stephen M. of Explore Church and Matt R. of Apex Baptist Church found the manual to be thorough and well balanced. Rick G. of Apex Baptist Church and Joe W. of the Village Church of Holly Springs noted the theological basis as biblical. The second of the open-ended questions sought weaknesses of the manual and asked how it could be improved. Here Stephen M. suggested that more practical tips and personal examples should be included. Joe W. concurred, as did Andy P. of Explore Church, and recommended elaborating on the content around the process steps.

The final question requiring a rating from one to ten asked the church leaders if they would use the training manual to develop and implement a creativity team at their church. The average rating was a strong "yes" with the average rating of 9.43. The final open-ended question was a follow-up to that question and asked "why?" or "why not?" The general consensus here was "yes" because of the potential benefit to both the church member and the congregation.

Based on the feedback provided by these local church leaders, I learned the following three lessons. Lesson 1: Pastors desire an easy to use training manual to help them incorporate creativity into their weekend worship services. Lesson 2: Pastors want assurance that using teams and creativity is biblically based. Lesson 3: Pastors want to hear success stories of how using a creativity team worked.

The final source of feedback was provided by outside "experts" who hold positions of creative influence in their churches. They received the training manual and

the evaluation questions by mail. Their feedback was based solely on a visual reading of the training manual. The manual evaluation questions were the same as those responded to by the eight local church leaders. Overall their ratings came in lower on the one to ten scale. One possible explanation for the lower average scores from the "experts" is that the basic idea of a creativity team is not new to them and they have already concluded that using a creativity team in a church setting is theologically acceptable. Because of that, the fact that my training manual spends much time and space justifying the use of creativity team theologically, it was not as helpful for their needs. Perhaps, they were looking for more practical application for the running and maintaining of a creativity team. A second possible explanation their evaluation scores were generally lower is that they do not have a personal relationship with me and the feedback was done long distance versus face-to-face.

The following was reported in their evaluation forms. In regard to the overall usefulness and helpfulness of the training manual the scores averaged near seven. The "experts" found the order and flow of the training manual somewhat logical and easy to follow with an average rating of 6.33. The feedback on the clarity of the explanation of keys terms was mixed, as two of the three noted it was done in a clear manner, while one rated it a two indicating that the section was confusing. In terms of the argument for the theological basis for both teams and creativity, these expert's responses tended toward very convincing, with the averages of 8.33 and 7.33. When inquiring about the balance of the training manual, two of the "experts" found it very balanced and one felt speaking to the concerns of using creativity in the local church only brought some balance to the training manual. Regarding the process for developing a creativity team and the amount

of information provided to implement a creativity team were rated to be somewhat clear

and somewhat adequate. The views of the "experts" were again mixed in terms of the

added value of the quote boxes and graphics. The average ratings were 7.0 and 6.0. The

feedback to the training manual through these questions gave some insights as to the

effectiveness of the manual, but, as with the eight local church leaders, the three open-

ended questions provided the most useful feedback.

　　　The first of these open-ended questions sought the greatest strengths of the

manual. All three noted the strong theological case made for the use of a creativity team.

They found it orderly and convincing. The second open-ended question sought

weaknesses of the manual and asked how it could be improved. Again, all three of the

"experts" were in agreement as how the training manual could be improved. Jordan R.

noted that "A 'manual' to me is supposed to emphasize the 'how-to,' whereas the bulk of

your work presents the 'what' and 'why.'" He went on to add "I think this would deliver

a greater impact if the main structure was the six-step process including" the "keep it

going" section of the training manual. Shawna R. concurred and noted that the training

manual was, "Not as strong on the nuts and bolts and how to develop the team." Here

she suggested that the manual needed more explanation. Todd S. likewise concurred and

noted that he desired to see more practical information for structuring the team, like how

many people should be on the team, what type of people should be avoided, how long

should meetings last, and how often should the team makeup change. Reviewing the

manual, I agree with the evaluation of the "experts" regarding the need to expand the

"how to" sections. More content and explanation of Leonard and Swap's five-step

creative process would better set up readers for building a successful feed-forward creativity team.

The final question requiring a rating from one to ten asked the "experts" if they would use the training manual to develop and implement a creativity team at their church. The average rating was 6.0 which equates to a "maybe." The final open-ended question was a follow-up to that question and asked "why?" or "why not?" The responses brought clarity to their answers. Shawna R. noted that she already has a creative program team in place at her church, yet felt a manual like this could encourage other churches to implement the concept at their church. Jordan R. suggested that with a few improvements that this training manual will be very valuable, especially for small churches or the inexperienced at using creativity in services and special events.

Based on the feedback provided by these "experts," I learned the following two lessons. Lesson 1: A feed-forward creativity team training manual has the potential to greatly benefit the local church. Lesson 2: A feed-forward creativity team training manual must provide clear and detailed "how-to" implementation steps.

All the feedback for the training manual gained from the various avenues proved to be very helpful and has provided a clear starting point for the next step of this research. I have learned that good feedback from others can enhance one's ability to communicate clearly, precisely, and effectively.

Personal Ministry Impact

In this section I will consider what I learned while working on this project and comment on how the outcomes are affecting me and my ministry personally. The outcomes discovered while developing the problem and its setting clearly revealed that

actions must be taken to address pastor workload issues and the "new evangelicals"

desire to be active participants in the worship experience. Finding that the development

and enablement of a feed-forward creativity team can assist in addressing both issues, I

will work diligently to explore how to make this happen successfully while continuing to

consider other options as well.

A thorough study of the biblical framework of both teams and creativity has given

me confidence that the development and enablement of a feed-forward creativity team is

theologically justifiable. The knowledge gained here revealed the potential benefits of

putting a team like this in place. Furthermore, it gives me and my church a solid

foundational basis to explain why we do what we do.

A careful reading of current authors on the topics of teams and creativity has

provided a wealth of knowledge to both consider and apply. As a result, I will cautiously

add creative elements to our worship services for fear of clouding the central focus—that

God be glorified and the gospel message be clearly proclaimed. I will also carefully

select those who will be a part of this team. I learned that team dynamic is crucial for its

future success. I will apply the team building tips, supplied by Collins, Hybels, and

Young, Jr. mentioned above. Furthermore, I will put in place the creative process

discovered during this research as outlined by Leonard and Swap in their book *When

Sparks Fly*.[9] Finally, developing and enabling a feed-forward creativity team will

broaden the ownership of my ministry by allowing others to have a say and an influence

as to what takes place during a worship service on a Sunday morning.

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[9]Leonard and Swap, 9.

The process of field-testing my training manual and gaining feedback provided knowledge that will impact my ministry going forward. The feedback revealed several spots that need to be strengthened to insure that the team is set up for success. I will expand the creative process itself and make the steps clearer and easier to follow and apply by adding additional content and providing examples from my team's experiences. Doing this will make my thoughts more exact and better insure that the creativity team members understand the purpose and goal of the team. In short, I believe that the primary ministry effects of adding a feed-forward creativity team is that it will involve more members of the congregation in service and produce more exciting, memorable, and God honoring worship services.

Application for the Church

In this section I will consider three situations and one possibility that have the potential to be helped by developing and enabling a feed-forward creativity team and thus benefit the church. The three situations will be the time-crunched pastor, services that seem uninspired, and congregants who desire a unique opportunity to be involved and serve.

The first situation that has the potential to be helped by developing and enabling a feed-forward creativity team is the pastor whose schedule is overloaded. The pastor will always have a busy schedule filled with studying, preaching, counseling, casting vision, developing leaders, and visiting the sick, to name a few. The outcomes of this project will not alleviate the demands on the pastor's schedule, but if applied, they do have the potential to help make his schedule more manageable. By allowing a team to come around him or her, the pastor can gain help by drawing on the ideas and life experience of

many people and thus reduce the constant creative stress he or she is under by sharing the load. This will prevent the pastor from being the creative bottleneck each weekend. Furthermore, by involving more people with wider experiences, the possibility of a more interesting and more memorable service goes up, thus creating the greater possibility for life-change in the congregants. The pastor will still have to study and exegete the passage for the sermon, but the creative elements that enhance the service can and should be shared.

The second situation that has the potential to be helped by developing and enabling a feed-forward creativity team, are worship services that seem dead, boring, and uninspired. There could be many root causes for this type of worship service, and putting a creativity team in place will not cure them all. But if a pastor is extremely busy and has limited time to dedicate thought to improving the weekend service, the help of a creativity team could make the difference. By adding people to the process, the ideas, man-hours, and energy increase exponentially, thus increasing the probability of the service being interesting and inspiring.

The third situation relates to congregants who are looking for a unique way to be involved and express their creative abilities. Those of the post-modern generation are interested in being involved in worship. They do not want to be merely sidelined observers, they want to participate. While establishing a feed-forward creativity team cannot accommodate everyone's desire to be involved, it does provide a unique opportunity for some. By getting involved with a team like this, the congregant has the opportunity to help shape an environment in which others in the church can be compelled to experience God and grow in Christlikeness.

As the above mentioned situations are addressed in the local church, the possibility of their successes spilling over to other churches occurs, thus impacting the universal church. The church must be relevant in order to make an impact. One way this can be transferred from a local church to the universal church is by establishing a creative network. Through this network, local churches can share both ideas, such as a creative approach to the Lord's Supper, and resources, such as elaborate props and drama scripts. This kind of partnership among local churches can build momentum for the clear sharing of the gospel message around the world.

Developing and enabling a feed-forward creativity team is in no way to be considered a cure all for these three situations or any others, but at least in these, if applied and used correctly, it can make a positive difference. Additionally, I believe that those who try it will have a lot of fun!

Changes for the Future

This final category will address what needs to be done in the future as a result of the outcomes of this project. The first step that needs to be done as a result of this thesis is that the training manual needs to be edited and reshaped, considering the advice given via the feedback by the local church leaders and the outside "experts." The revised training manual can build off the strengths of the original, which were the explanation of the theological "what" and "why" of a feed-forward creativity team. Additionally, the "how to" portion of the manual can be expanded to better set up those using it for long term success. This could be done by condensing the theological matter into key bullet points or grouped as key learnings. Content and personal experience examples could be

added to the "how to" section of the manual to provide improved comprehension of the creative process.

Following the revision of the training manual, it should be field-tested again. This field-testing should include, if possible, some of the same evaluators as before so as to determine if the edits were effective in improving the training manual. In addition to field-testing the training manual, an implementation test should be done. In other words, a feed-forward creativity team should be developed from scratch following the guidelines laid out in the training manual. Various evaluations should be taken along the way to determine the actual effectiveness of the training manual as it is used. This feedback, along with the feedback received on the manual itself, should be processed and collated, and the findings recorded to ascertain the overall usability and effectiveness of the training manual.

Finally, after revising the manual and thoroughly field-testing it, the information, along with practical illustrations and examples of successful use, should be outlined for consideration to be published in book form. This will allow the material and the concepts discovered to have a greater impact on the church.

Findings from reading, experience, and feedback on the training manual confirm my assumption that the use of a feed-forward creativity team can add creative elements to a worship service that will make it more compelling, memorable, and life-changing. The only modification to my assumption is that creative elements must be added to a service with discernment. Working on this thesis has been very eye-opening and a tremendous learning experience. I hope the outcomes of this work will serve as a springboard and inspire many to continue to advance the concept of team creativity in the local church.

APPENDIX 1

CHURCH SURVEY
(Number of people involved in service planning)

Name of church	Denomination	# involved in service planning	Primary Planner	Notes
Apex Baptist	SBC	3	Senior Pastor	Pastor; Min. of Music; Band leader
Hope Church	Pentecostal Holiness	2	Senior Pastor	Pastor; Min of Music
Turner Memorial Baptist	SBC	2	Worship Pastor	
Bethel Church	Non-denominational	2	Senior Pastor	Music Min.
Abiding Presence	Lutheran	3	Pastor	Use Lectionary;
Fuquay-Varina Presbyterian Ch.	Presbyterian	2	Pastor	Wife
Fuquay-Varina Baptist	SBC	3	Senior Pastor	Pastor; Assoc. Pastor; Music Min. Brainstorms sermon series topics during retreats with full staff
The Village Church of Holly Springs	SBC	2	Worship Pastor	
Wake Chapel	Non-denominational	4	Senior Pastor	Pastor; Assoc. Pastor; Music Min; Secretary
Grace Community Church	Non-denominational	2	Worship Pastor	
1st United Methodist Church	Methodist	2	Pastor	
Life Springs	Non-denominational	2	Pastor	Pastor & Music Min.

Brain Sharing: The Art of Creative Collaboration in Sermon Preparation

Equipping the Church to Develop and Enable
a Feed-Forward Creativity Team

Brain Sharing:

Table of Contents

A goal of this training manual is to provide the local pastor a new strategy which will enable him or her to create more compelling worship services by empowering gifted members of the congregation to assist with the development of both the worship service and the weekend message. By enlisting a team of volunteers the pastor will be able to apply additional man hours, more knowledge, and greater life experience to the service planning and message preparation process with the potential result of greater overall service quality.

Introduction

The typical worship service in churches today involves limited input and member contribution in its planning and development. Service planning and development involves many elements including:

- Sermon preparation
- Song selection
- Establishing order of service
- Element use such as…
    - Drama
    - The Lord's Supper
    - Baptism
    - Scripture reading
    - Prayer

A brief phone survey of twelve local churches found in many cases these decisions are made by only two people, the senior pastor and the music minister. This paradigm impacts the worship experience in several ways.

1. Numerous members and attendees, with their God-given gifts, talents, and skills are sidelined and not given the opportunity to use them in a satisfying way.
2. Because service development has been limited to two or three people, the majority of church attendees are left to shuffle in and out of church week after week, allowed only to participate in the worship service but not its creation or planning.

Unless this paradigm is changed, two glaring implications may occur.

1. The Pastor, as the primary planner and creator of weekend worship services will become the bottleneck to a more creative and meaningful worship experience because he or she has limited time, energy, and creative capacity.
2. The regular church attendees may grow bored and perhaps frustrated with their lack of opportunity to exercise their gifts, talents, and abilities in the worship service planning and development process.

While the entire congregation cannot be involved in the creation of a worship service, the strategic use of several qualified members could greatly enhance the service.

Notes:

Defining Key Terms

A. What is a team?

"A team is a small group of people working together to achieve a common goal."

"A group of people committed to a common purpose who choose to cooperate in order to achieve exceptional results."
--Pat MacMillan, *The Performance Factor*

"A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable."
--Katzenbach and Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams*

Characteristics of Teams:

- Made up of a group of people

- Formed around a common purpose

- Formed around what they desire to accomplish: performance goals

Characteristics of High Performance Teams

1. Clear, Common Purpose
2. Crystal Clear Roles
3. Accepted Leadership
4. Effective Team Processes
5. Solid Relationships
6. Excellent Communication

--Pat MacMillan, *The Performance Factor*
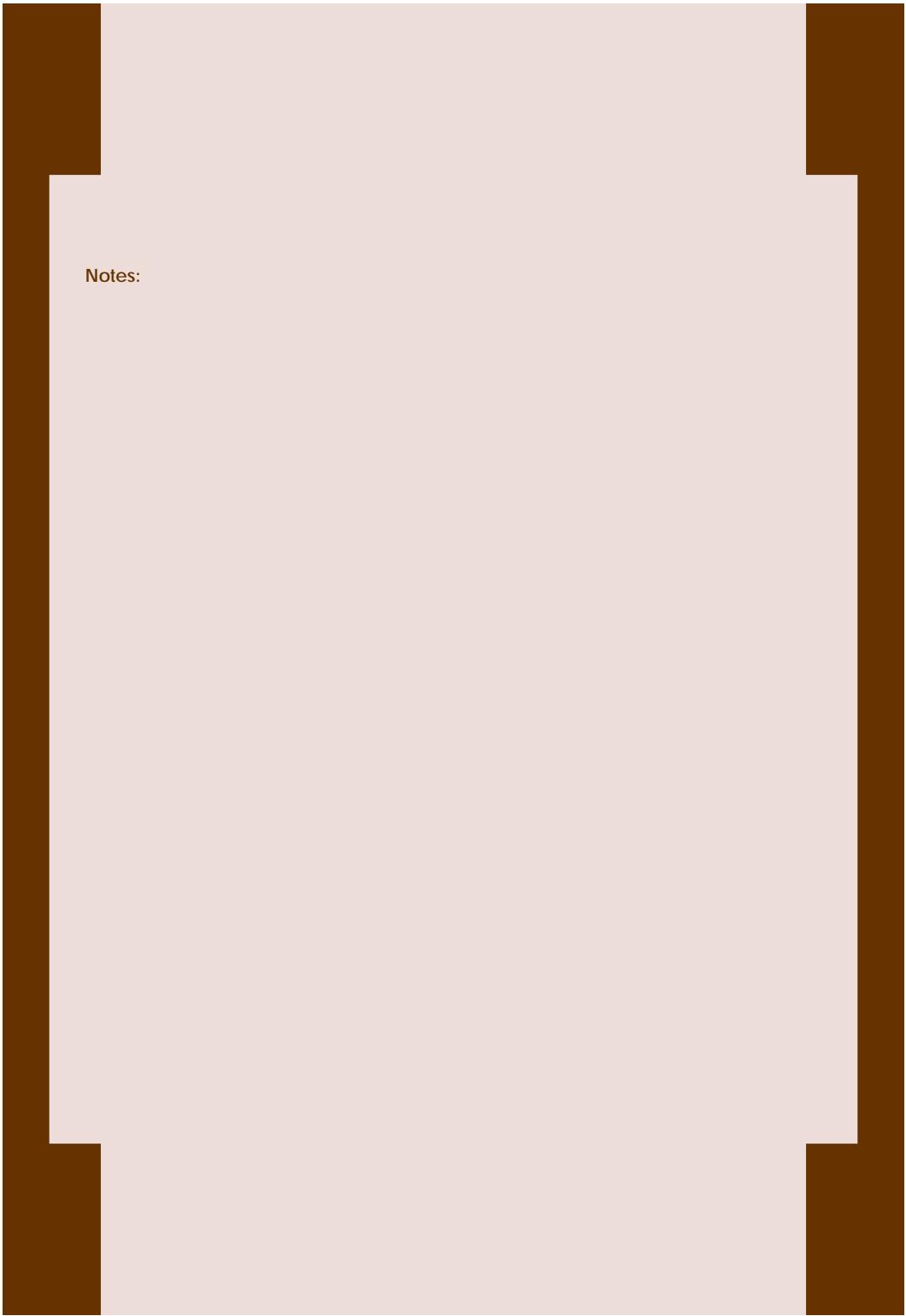
Characteristics of a Healthy Team

1. **T**rust—Healthy Teams Trust.
2. **E**mpower—Healthy Teams Empower.
3. **A**ssimilate—Healthy Teams Assimilate.
4. **M**anage—Healthy Teams Manage.
5. **S**erve—Healthy Teams Serve.

--Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*
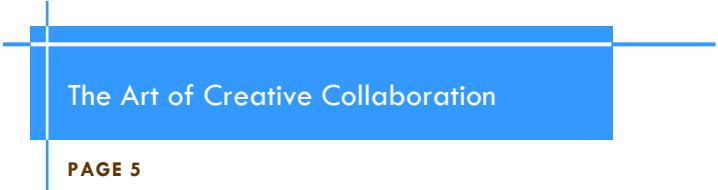
Notes:

Defining Key Terms

B. What is Creativity?

"Creativity is thinking of acting in a different way"

Howard Hendricks defines creativity as:
The generation of unique, innovative thoughts, actions, and feelings, with appropriate implementation for the benefit of others.
It often means little more than the ability of perceiving in an unhabitual way. It is a function of knowledge, imagination, and evaluation.
He narrows his definition to three essential characteristics: novelty, usefulness, and re-producibility. These characteristics taken together mean that "creativity is novelty that is useful and reproducible."

"Creativity brings people in the front door, and creativity keeps people from going out the back door." --Ed Young

Myths about Creativity:

Myth 1: Creative output depends on a few, often flamboyantly different individuals.

Myth 2: Creativity is a solitary process.

Myth 3: Intelligence is more important than creativity.

Myth 4: Creativity can't really be managed.

Myth 5: Creative groups are found only in "The Arts" or in high-technology companies.

Myth 6: Creativity is relevant only to Big Ideas.

The Art of Creative Collaboration

Creativity as a response:

"Creativity is not about me. It is not about you. It is not us somehow acting like little gods, creating on our own in the same way God creates. Although he asks us to imitate him, we are not imitators of God in this dimension. The most we can hope for is to respond appropriately and creatively to who God is and what he means. Creativity is a response….Creativity is worship insofar as it is, at its essence, a response."

--Michael Card, *Scribbling in the Sand*
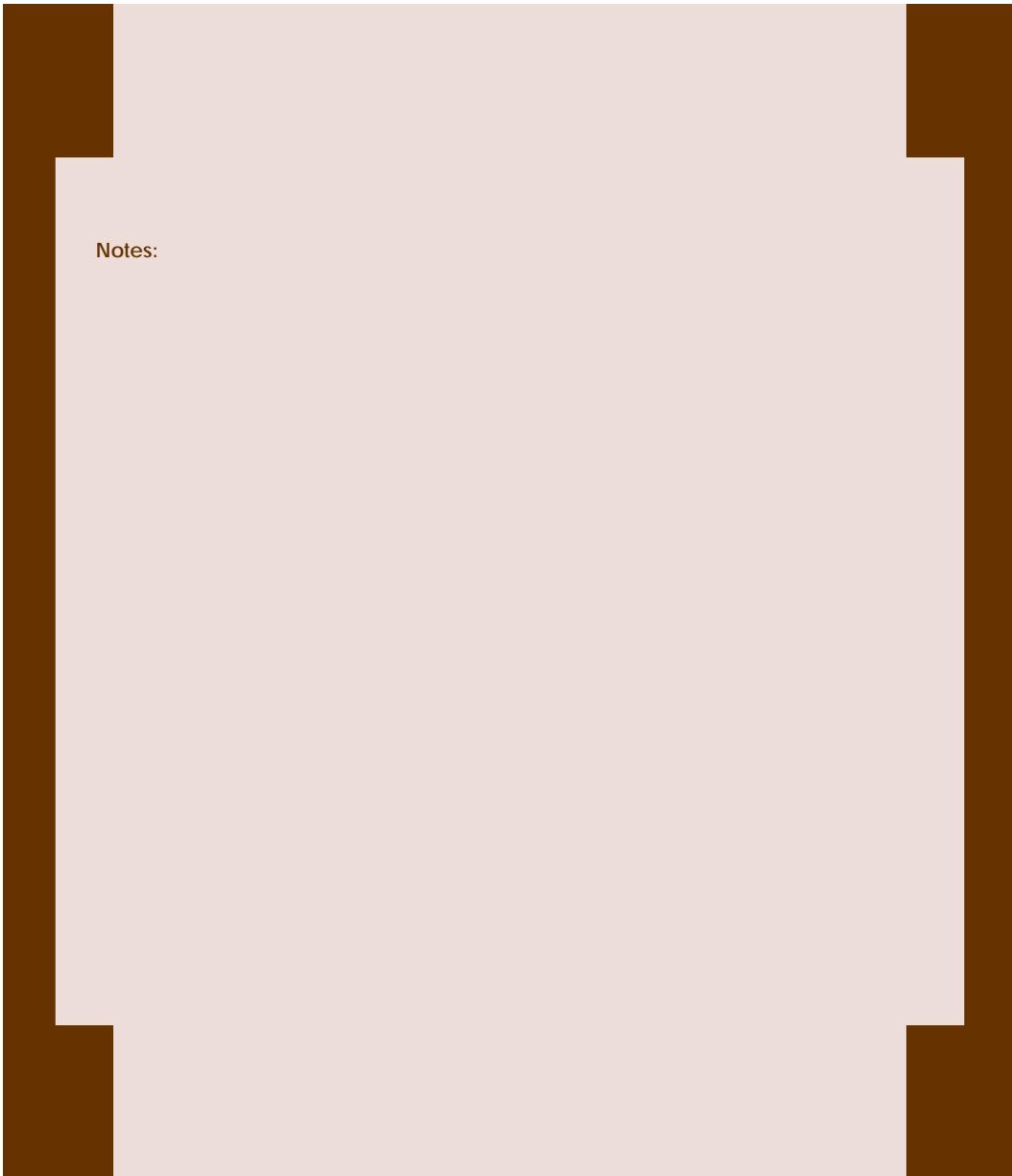
Notes:

Defining Key Terms

C. What are Creativity Teams?

"A Creativity Team is a team working together to produce and develop novel ideas that are likely to be useful."

"We maintain that any group can be more creative, even if its members individually wouldn't score highly on tests for creativity."   --Leonard and Swap

"Team creativity is one of the most precious commodities any church has."

--Nancy Beach, An Hour on Sunday

**Why use creativity teams?
What is the benefit?**

1. It brings a fresh flow of ideas
2. It reduces creative pressure
3. It alleviates some of the pastor's stress
4. It multiplies your talent base
5. It mentors future speakers and leaders
6. It expands your knowledge of your audience
7. It brings a wider range of thinking
8. It can take creativity to another dimension

Notes:

Theological Basis: What does the Bible say?

About Teams?

The Trinity (The nature of God):

The doctrine of the trinity is one of the most important, yet most difficult to comprehend, doctrines of the Christian faith. While the word "trinity" is not found in the Bible, the concept of a three-in-one God is clearly there and gives the student of Scripture great insight into what God is like and how he works. The doctrine can be summarized with the following statements. First, God is three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Second, each person is fully God. Third, there is one God. [1]

The Trinity is incomprehensible, and it is certainly not the purpose of this thesis to bring clarity to this key doctrine, but rather take what is revealed in Scripture regarding God's three-in-one nature and apply it to the modern use of teams. Teamwork can be found in the Godhead. The Godhead reflects unity and diversity, and all three persons have different primary functions in relating to the world. Grudem argues that these different functions can be seen in the work of creation. "God the Father spoke the creative words to bring the universe into being. But it was God the Son, the eternal Word of God, who carried out these creative decrees….The Holy Spirit was active as well in a different way, in 'moving' or 'hovering' over the face of the waters, apparently sustaining and manifesting God's immediate presence in his creation."[2] Distinct functions of the three persons can be seen in the work of redemption as well. Grudem notes:

> God the Father planned redemption and sent his Son into the world. The Son obeyed the Father and accomplished redemption for us. God the Father did not come and die for our sins, nor did God the Holy Spirit. That was the particular work of the Son. Then, after Jesus ascended back into heaven, the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son to apply redemption to us….It is especially the role of the Holy Spirit to give us

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[1] Wayne Grudem, *System Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 231

[2] Ibid., 249.

regeneration or new spiritual life, to sanctify us, and to empower us for service. In general, the work of the Holy Spirit seems to be to bring to completion the work that has been planned by God the Father and begun by God the Son.[3]

Thus, while each person of the Godhead is fully God and equal in their attributes, each has different functions in relating to the world. Because God displays both unity and diversity in his nature, it is not surprising that some of that unity and diversity can be found in the nature and works of man. In fact, there are many activities in which individual humans contribute to the unity and purpose of a larger activity, such as, our jobs at work, in a musical performance, on an athletic team, or as part of a local church. While comprehension of the Trinity will never be achieved, modeling God in both unity and diversity can be obtained in a team environment.

The Church (The nature of God's Body):

The nature of God's Body, the church, gives insight as to how God expects its members to interact with one another. The church or the body of Christ, as it is described metaphorically in the New Testament, provides foundational teaching on interdependence and teamwork. "The church is the community of all true believers for all time."[4] This unique group has been assembled by Jesus Christ himself and has been equipped with various gifts with which to carry out his work. The gifts are "simply tools" and no believer has all the gifts. As a result, the metaphor of the church as the body of Christ should increase church member's interdependence on each other. [5] Commenting on the oneness the body of Christ has through diversity from 1Cor. 12:12-26, Gilbert Bilezikian writes:
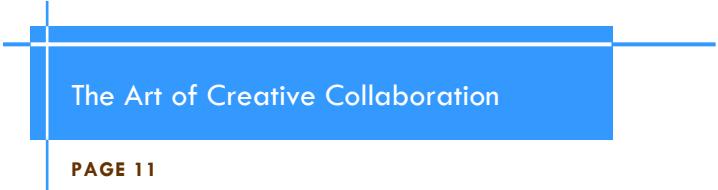
> As his body, the church does not function through just one of its members, such as a pontiff or a head bishop, neither is it ruled by a few people such as the clergy. "For the body does not consist of one member but of many" (v. 14 RSV). All the members together make up the body, the church (v. 12). To function properly, it needs the active

[3]Ibid., 249.

[4]Ibid., 853.

[5]Ibid., 859, 1031.

participation of all its members. Should the foot or hand go dead, the body becomes disabled. This is why the Holy Spirit utilizes for common good the gifts with which he has endowed all individual believers (vv. 7, 11).

Just as the life of the human body is dependent on the functioning of all its parts, so the life of the church is dependent on the utilization of each person's gift. The use of only a few parts of the human body cannot make it function properly. Neither can the church function when only some of the people's gifts are utilized.[6]

Bilezikian concludes that it would be wrong for the church to assign a certain number of people to solely handle the work of ministry. Each member has been gifted and has a role to play and a contribution to make for the health and betterment of the body. Each member is needed, along with their giftedness, by all the other members. [7] Brian Dodd writes that the "conception of leadership in the body of Christ must be a theology of 'we.'" [8] The church, as a body, is to function like a team and for the team to be successful every teammate must be engaged and prepared to contribute.
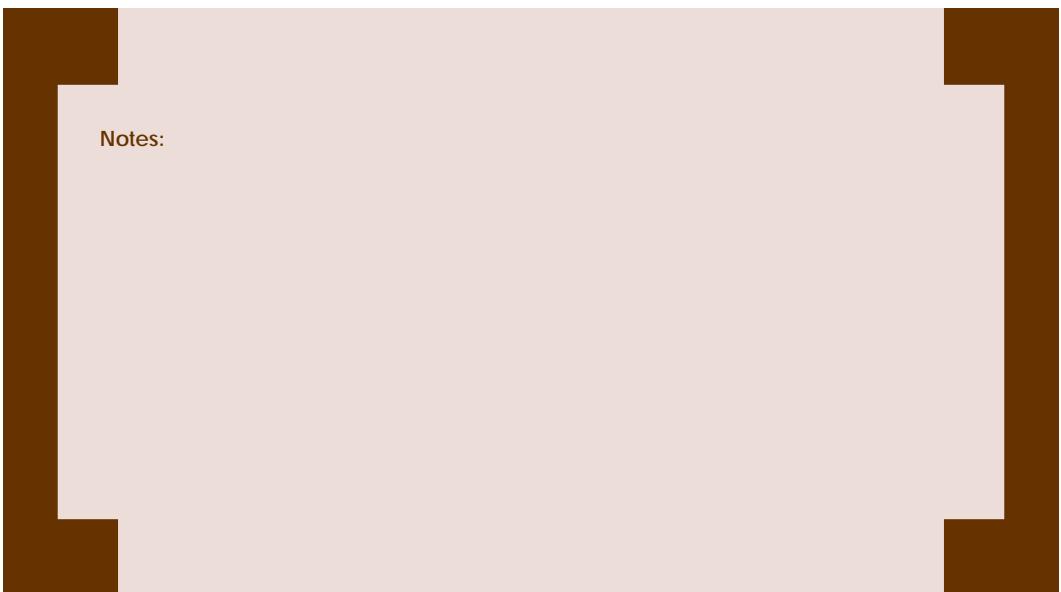
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[6]Gilbert Bilezikian, *Christianity 101* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 190.

[7]Ibid., 190.

[8]Brian J. Dodd, *Empowered Church Leadership: Ministry in the Spirit According to Paul* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 106.

Key examples:

1. Moses in Exodus 18
2. Nehemiah in the book of Nehemiah
3. Paul in much of the New Testament
   a. His language
      i. "koinonia"
         1. partnership
         2. fellowship
         3. sharing
      ii. "syn"—prefix
         1. with
         2. co-
            a. co-workers
            b. co-prisoners
            c. co-slaves
            d. co-soldiers
            e. co-laborers
      iii. Use of many personal names
         1. Barnabas
         2. Timothy
         3. Luke
         4. Titus
         5. Priscilla & Aquila
4. Jesus Christ
   a. Team Builder—concentric circles
      i. Inner circle (3—Peter, James, & John)
      ii. The 12 disciples
      iii. Luke 10 mentions the 72 he sent out
5. Other Key Passages
   a. Proverbs 11:14
   b. Proverbs 15:22
   c. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Notes:

Theological Basis: What does the Bible say?

About Creativity?

Who God is:

The Bible reveals many of the attributes and characteristics of God. The first attribute of God that is mentioned in the Bible is found in Genesis 1:1. There it states "In the beginning God created." The Hebrew term used here for created is *bārā'* and is used consistently in the Old Testament in reference to a new activity. The term always refers to the product created and not to the material from which the creation was made, nor does "create" necessarily mean the item created is something altogether new. Bruce Waltke points out that while many verbs denote God's creative abilities; this term distinguishes itself because it is used solely with God. This verb means to produce something new, fresh, and perfect, and it tells the reader something about God.

Man, part of God's creation:

Genesis 1:26 tells the reader something about himself. This verse states that man was created in God's image and likeness. Being created in the image and likeness of God gives mankind dignity and responsibility and grants the potential and ability to mirror the Creator.[13]

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[9]Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26* of The New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 128.

[10]Ibid., 128.

[11]Bruce Waltke, with Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 58-59.

[12]Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 106.

[13]John H. Walton, *Genesis* of The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 137.

"Image" is used in the Old Testament for actual forms and shapes of idols, while the term "likeness" is more abstract and used to further clarify the meaning of image.[14] The image of God differentiates mankind from animals and was not lost at the Fall, but was at some level affected, even reduced.[15] Old Testament scholar John H. Walton concludes that "the image is a physical manifestation of divine (royal) essence that bears the function of that which it represents; this gives the image-bearer the capacity to reflect the attributes of the one represented and to act on his behalf."[16] Theologian Wayne Grudem writes that man, being in the image of God, means that "man is like God and represents God." He adds that man's likeness to God can be seen and displayed in human creativity, and that this creativity can include areas such as the arts, music, and literature, but should not be reduced to just those areas or just to those who excel in those areas.[17] Paul Johnson makes the following astute observation:

> Creativity, I believe, is inherent in all of us. We are the progeny of almighty God. God is defined in many ways: all-powerful, all-wise, and all-seeing; everlasting; the lawgiver; the ultimate source of love, beauty, justice, and happiness. Most of all, he

Notes:

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[14]Ross, 112.

[15]Walton, 130-31.

[16]Ibid., 131.

[17]Grudem, 442, 447.

> is the creator. He created the universe, and those who inhabit it; and, in creating us, he made us in his own image, so that his personality and capacities, however feebly, are reflected in our minds, bodies, and immortal spirits. So we are, by our nature, creators as well.[18]

In sum, God is creative and has created man in his image and likeness. As a result, man has the ability to be creative as well.

Man's Response:

Men and women created in the image of God are not expected to passively inhabit the earth. Ephesians 2:10 states "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." This verse is declaring that mankind is not responsible for its own salvation, but that it is God's workmanship. Mankind is his work of art or his masterpiece.[19] The purpose of God's workmanship, his creative activity, is not merely to produce people that will sit around to be viewed as a piece of art. No, this creation, mankind, created anew in Christ, "is to be active and productive like the Creator."[20] Ephesians 5:1 says "to be imitators of God." The language here is in the present imperative and urges the reader to continually become like God by imitation. The term means "copier" and is to be as close to the original as possible.[21] Children of God are to imitate God by following his example of love toward others, and by utilizing various attributes of God that are in mankind as the result of being created in his image and likeness. While creativity is not primarily in view in Ephesians, it is certainly included in what it means to "copy God."

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[18]Paul Johnson, *Creators: From Chaucer and Dürer to Picasso and Disney* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006), 1.

[19]John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians* of The Bible Speaks Today, New Testament ed. John R. W. Stott (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), 84.

[20]Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians* of The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 107.

[21]Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 644.

Key Examples:

1. Bezalel and Oholiab in Exodus 35
    a. Skilled artists
    b. Commissioned by God to supervise and implement the building plan for the tabernacle.
2. Jesus Christ (much of the Gospels)
    a. Teaching lessons
        i. Spontaneous
        ii. Visuals
            1. fig tree
            2. mill stone
            3. coin

Notes:

Concerns:

By this time it is obvious that I value creativity, but this does not blind me to its weaknesses. In fact, creativity may not always enhance a worship service, or more specifically a sermon. If used inappropriately or with poor discretion, creativity can become a distraction. As noted above, creativity has the potential to enhance the worship service by capturing the audience's attention, providing a memorable teaching moment, and ushering them into a meaningful experience with God. Some critics of creativity argue that the word of God alone is sufficient and that the use of visuals, for example, is mere fluff that hints of Hollywood entertainment and is thus a distraction to meaningful worship of God and perhaps even idolatry! David W. Henderson acknowledges that current culture is consumer driven and distracted and therefore engaging the audience is crucial, but he warns

that the church must be vigilant against using creativity for the sake of entertainment alone. He argues that when the service becomes a performance, then the preacher will become a showman and the content negotiable.[22] Mark Dever concurs, but is not a proponent of stifling all creativity. He especially encourages creativity in sharing the gospel, but cautions strongly against becoming reliant on entertainment in weekend worship services. [23] Even Dan Kimball, an advocate of high congregant participation and experience, warns against being "so focused on creating cool multi-sensory worship services that we end up creating consumers of another kind."[24] Wisdom and discretion must be used with adding creative elements to a worship service. Great care must be taken to ensure that the added creative elements enhance the message and bring glory to God.

Gregory Edward Reynolds is particularly concerned about the use of electronic media in the church. He fears that if the church embraces this media without clear and careful study as just another tool for connecting with our members, then perhaps the gospel will be compromised and moved to a secondary role.[25] He is particularly hard on Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. He asserts that Hybels has rejected much of his Christian Reformed background in order to provide a church where attendees will not say that church is always "boring, predictable, and irrelevant." He believes Hybels has turned Willow Creek's services into a "slick, show-biz service where drama and soft rock are served up on a stage washed in pink and blue spotlights." He describes the message that follows as a "soft-sell

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[22]David W. Henderson, *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to Our Changing Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 87.

[23]Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005), 55.

[24]Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 156.

[25]Gregory Edward Reynolds, *The Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures: Preaching in the Electronic Age* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000), 278-279.

sermon" that others have labeled as "pop gospel, fast-food theology, McChurch."[26] The issue for Reynolds is that Hybels claims his message is based on solid Biblical principles and that only the medium is unorthodox. He wonders then if the unorthodox approach will deliver orthodox followers of Christ.[27] To him the question is: "What kind of a God are we communicating?" Is he a majestic sovereign God who uses creative means to connect with people without being forced into a set pattern, or is he "just a psychosociological phenomenon?" Reynolds does not accuse all who practice these methods of being wrongly motivated, but he does believe that they have moved God and his truth to the back burner while making technique king.[28]
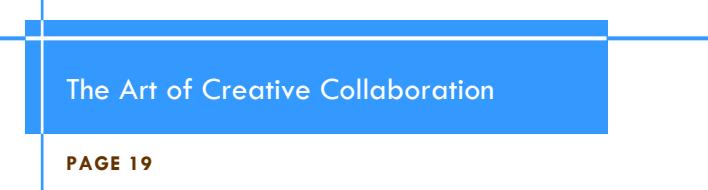
Reynolds and critics raise several points that must be addressed. First, and most importantly, what kind of God are we communicating? A high view of God is essential. The God presented must be the Biblical, sovereign God who spoke all things into existence and offers the opportunity of life change that includes an eternity in His presence. God's message is the life changing message of hope, not the words, agenda, or techniques of any man. A second issue that

Notes:

[26]Ibid., 284.

[27]Ibid., 284-85.

[28]Ibid., 285.

Reynolds raises is the basis of the message. The message has to be grounded in the Word of God to have any lasting value or impact. The message or sermon or service cannot be driven by what the planners think lost, unchurched people want to hear or might find enjoyable. The message can and should be *sensitive* to "seekers," but not *driven* by what would entertain them. However, this does not rule out the use of creativity, electronic or otherwise, to enhance the preaching of God's word in worship service. Our society has been greatly influenced by electronic media, and preachers must take the effects of that influence into consideration while preparing sermons and services. Reynolds is right that the church must be aware of the effects and influence of electronic media, but neither should the media be discarded as of no value.

Creativity should be used wisely and carefully. Thoughtful consideration and preparation should go into each movie clip, drama, song, illustration, or other element deemed valuable to developing an environment in which the audience can truly experience God. Using creativity for the sake of using creativity is not acceptable, nor will it glorify the Lord. But creativity carefully worked can glorify the Lord, enhance the worship experience, and deepen the audience's walk with their creator.

Creativity Teams (An Affirmation)

Based on the nature of God, that He is team oriented and creative, and the nature of the church, that it depends on the input of many parts, and the nature of man, that he is created in the image of God and thus displays that attribute, and because of the supporting examples found in the Bible, I, along with the following experts, advocate the use of a feed-forward creativity team in both the development of a sermon series and with sermon preparation itself. Creativity expert Michael Michalko urges that ways of combining talent should be sought out. He points out that without the stimulation and critique of a group of friends, Einstein, for example, might not have

Brain Sharing:

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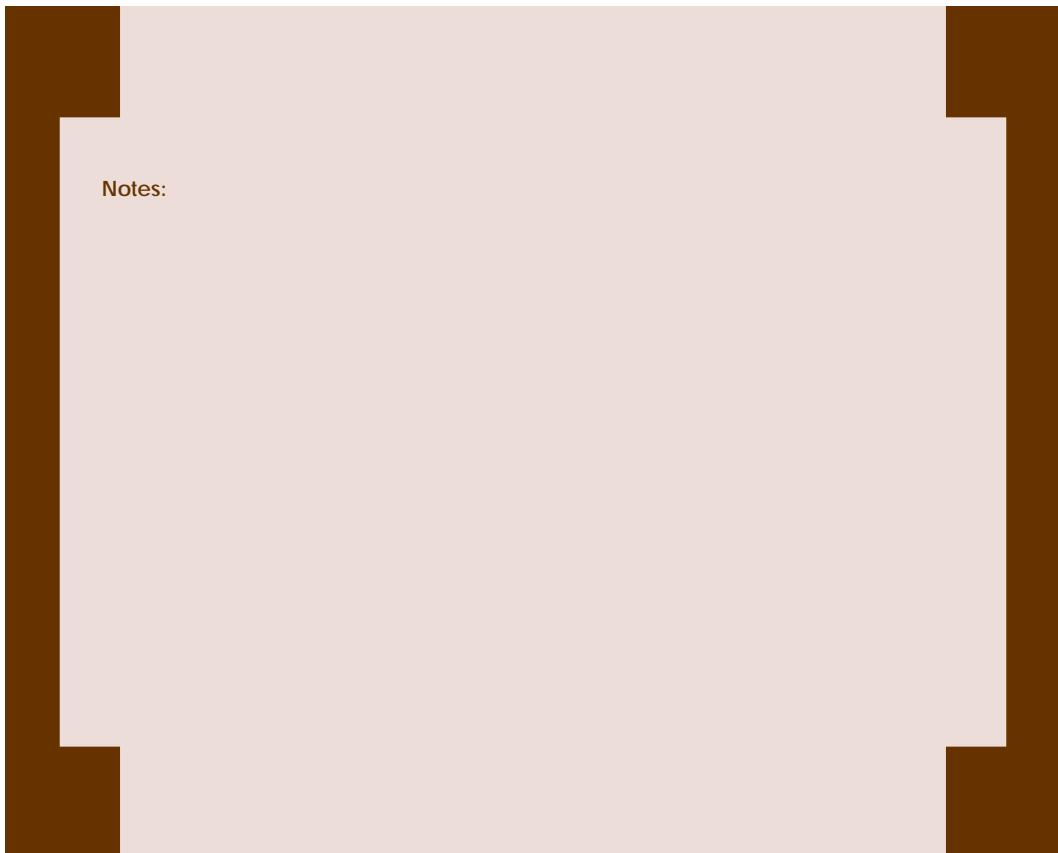
achieved what he did.[29] Pastor Andy Stanley believes the team approach to series planning is beneficial. Not only does it allow for a wider range of thinking, it reduces the creative pressure. He only wishes that he had involved others in the process sooner.[30] Nancy Beach agrees and believes that the team process takes creativity to another dimension.[31] Ed Young Jr., writes that team creativity has changed the quality of his communication.[32] He notes that you still have to
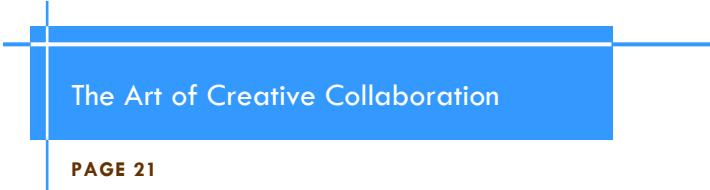
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[29]Michael Michalko, *Cracking Creativity: The Secrets of Creative Genius* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2001), 136.

[30]Andy Stanley. "Preaching Without Fear: An Interview with Andy Stanley." Interview by Michael Duduit. *Preaching* 20, no. 1 (July-August 2004): 33.

[31]Beach, 176.

[32]Young, Jr. *Preaching Creatively*, 56.

labor in the study but the team effort greatly reduces the stress, allows the message to be more creative than if working alone, and allows the pastor to remain fresh.[33] Young writes that creativity is not a ten letter word, but a four letter word spelled "T-E-A-M." In his opinion, creativity must be a team exercise because everyone is creative.[34]

> The justification of team creativity can be summed up in the words of Henry James:
>
> Every man works better when he has companions working in the same
> line, and yielding to the stimulus of suggestion, comparison, emulation.
> Great things have of course been done by solitary workers; but they have
> usually been done with double the pains they would have cost if they had
> been produced in more genial circumstances.[35]

A properly functioning and enabled feed-forward creativity team has the potential to produce creative, relevant, helpful, and timely biblical messages, and provide the opportunity for more congregational members to use their gifts and talents in a meaningful way. Furthermore, it will free the pastor from the pressure of being the sole person responsible for the planning and development of worship services.   The team option provides the congregation the opportunity to be a better steward of time and talents.

Notes:

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[33]Ibid., 56.

[34]Ed Young, Jr. "Communicating with Creativity" *Preaching* 20, no. 6 (May-June 2005): 12.

[35]Bennis and Biederman, 6-7.

Developing A Creativity Team
(How to do it)

Remember:

> "Creativity is a *process*, and the process is similar regardless of the magnitude or industry location of the project."
>
> --Leonard and Swap

Like any process, it can take time. But here is a plan to get you and your team on the road to creative breakthroughs that will have an impact on your worship services!

> *"There are no shortcuts. Creativity blooms when the mental soil is deep, rich, and well prepared."*
>
> --Leonard and Swap

PREPARATION:
(work before you get to work)

Member Selection: who should be involved?

> *"The right group composition is important."*
> -Leonard and Swap

"First, remember that it's a lot easier to invite additional help than to 'un-invite' unwanted help. Second, be selective in terms of the people you bring to the meeting. These people need to be able to think creatively but also need to be able to have their ideas bypassed from time to time."

--Advice from Dave Ferguson, The Big Idea

You want your team to produce useful creative options. This means you must select a team who, in combination, will provide you with the requisite variety.

Diversity tends to bring tension. You want team members to be able to handle vigorous debates and challenges in effort to land on the best creative idea.

> *"The great advantage of a highly diverse group over an individual is that even if individual members are still thinking within the boundaries of their own experience, collectively they will have numerous perspectives and those perspectives can combine in wonderfully novel and useful ways."*
>
> *--Leonard and Swap*

ADVICE TO CONSIDER:
What to look for in a potential team member.

Bill Hybels	Ed Young
1. CHARACTER	1. TEACHABLE
2. COMPETENCE	2. LOYAL
3. CHEMISTRY	3.COMMITTED

Notes:

<u>Make Your Picks, Set Your Goals</u>: what do we want to accomplish?

1. Explain the Mission
   a. Set the meeting structure
   b. Have an agenda
2. Explain the desired team dynamics
   a. Individual expectations (job descriptions, responsibilities)
   b. Desire for "creative abrasion"

PITFALL TO AVOID:

PATRICK LENCIONI

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

1. Absence of Trust
2. Fear of Conflict
3. Lack of Commitment
4. Avoidance of Accountability
5. Inattention to Results

Location, Location, Location!!!

Designing the environments:

Two key environments are considered, physical and psychological. They provide guidance on how to design physical surroundings and the culture of the organization so as to build a creative ecology into the organization. Beginning with the physical environment, the authors argue that the architecture, acoustics, and even the furniture can support or inhibit creativity. The wrong kinds of surroundings drain off energy and become barriers to the creative process. Likewise, Nancy Beach stresses location. She thinks where a creative team meets matters. Windowless rooms with uncomfortable furniture and poor decorations do not set a creativity team up for brainstorming success. Beach suggests even changing meeting locations from time to time and recommends trying a local restaurant, private home, or going outside. Community Christian Church and Pastor Dave Ferguson understand this idea and as Ferguson reveals in *The Big Idea*,

environment and proximity make a difference. They place most of their staff in workstations where they face each other with no barriers. This setup allows for increased interaction and brainstorming among team members during non-meeting times. This type of environment could result in what Leonard and Swap site as "drive-by idea snatching." Physical environments such as workspace can encourage or inhabit creativity.

In addition to physical environments, Leonard and Swap believe designing psychological environment conducive to creativity is important. The successful psychological environment allows the room for and even expects the teams to fail. Beach notes that there is no learning without failure. Leonard and Swap write that team leaders must understand that intelligent failures can lead to the desired breakthrough. A second factor necessary in insuring a psychological environment conducive to creativity is open communication. Team members have to feel like they have been heard and that their contributions are worth listening to. MacMillan and Lencioni argue that open and excellent communication is necessary for a team to be successful, so Leonard and Swap thought makes sense when concerning a creativity team. A third and perhaps the most crucial way to insure an effective psychological environment conducive to creativity is to promote passion among the team members. This can be done, according to Leonard and Swap, by setting difficult but attainable goals, granting the team some autonomy, and by creating a climate of optimism and confidence in the future.

Notes:

INNOVATION OPPORTUNITY:
(Identifying the problem requiring creativity)

At this step in the creative process you simply make the team aware of what the goal for creativity is.

It could be for…

- A worship service, perhaps a special service like Easter or the Lord's Supper
- Sermon series
- Individual sermon

GENERATION OF OPTIONS:
(promoting divergent thinking)

At this step the creativity begins!

The team may consider topics such as…

- Key verses
- Big Ideas
- Creative Hooks
    - Songs
    - Set design
    - Illustrations
    - Drama
    - Video
    - Give aways

As the leader of the meeting you may need to utilize some of the techniques suggested by Howard Hendricks in his nine-step process to jump-start creative thought.

His techniques are as follows:
1. Brainstorming
2. Plussing
3. Five-Sensing
4. Objection-Countering
5. Gaming
6. Mind-Mapping
7. Roles
8. Thinking Hats
9. Storyboarding

INCUBATION:
(taking time to consider options)

At this step in the creative process you should allow the team time to process all the ideas generated during the meeting. Then reconvene at a later time and narrow the options.

CONVERGENCE ON ONE OPTION:
(moving from many options to one innovation)

At this step decisions are made and creativity is implemented.
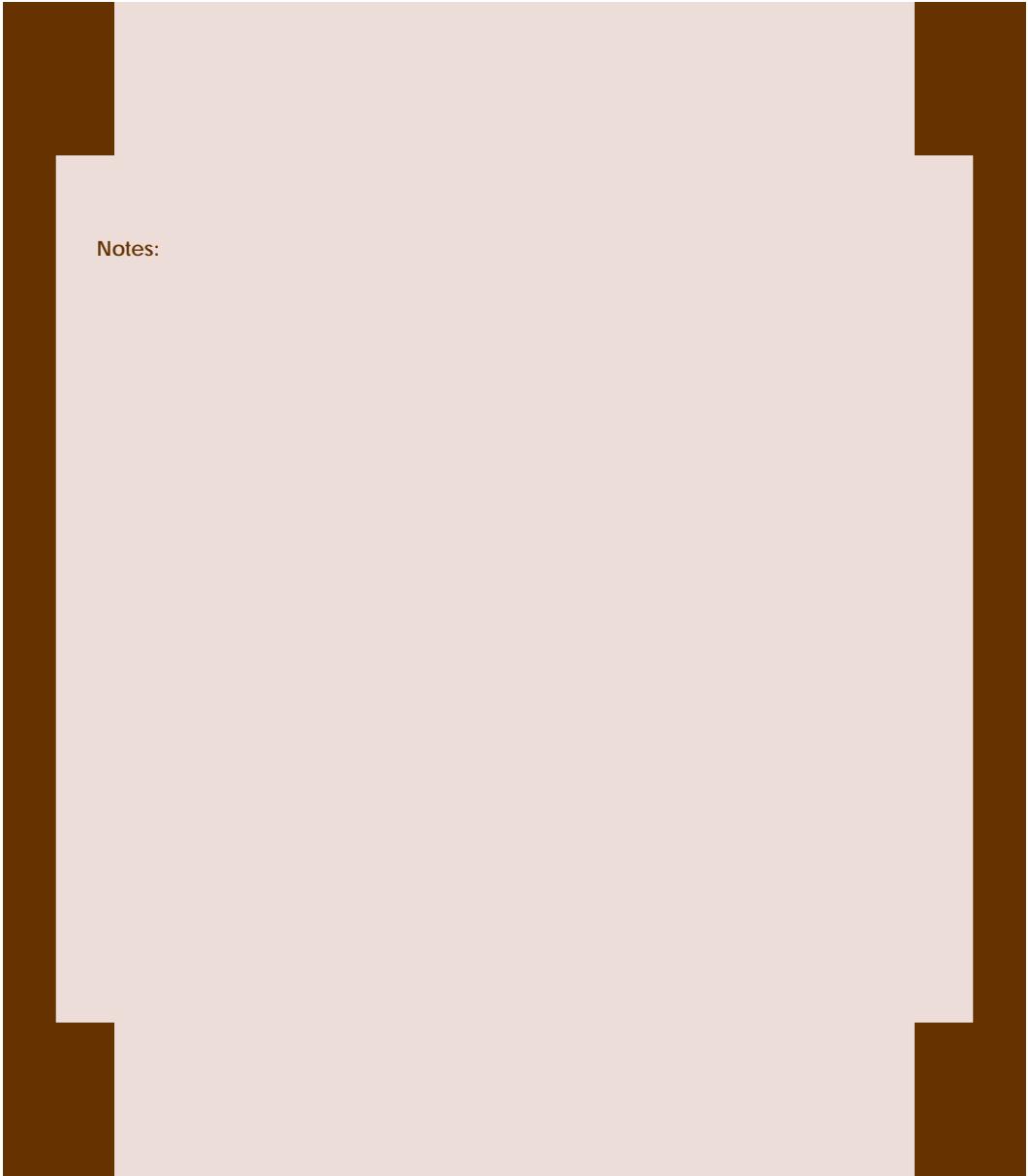
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How To Keep It Going

In order to keep your creativity team going strong you must…

- Make it a high value.
- Be disciplined in preparing for the meetings.
- Be disciplined in meeting regularly.
- Rotate different people on the team from time to time.
- Have fun!!!!

Notes:

Recommended Resources

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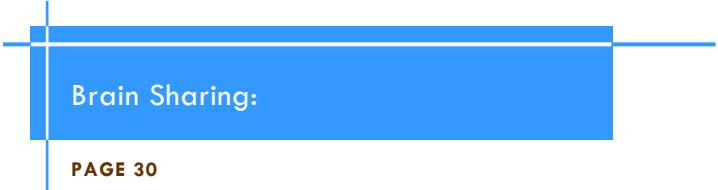
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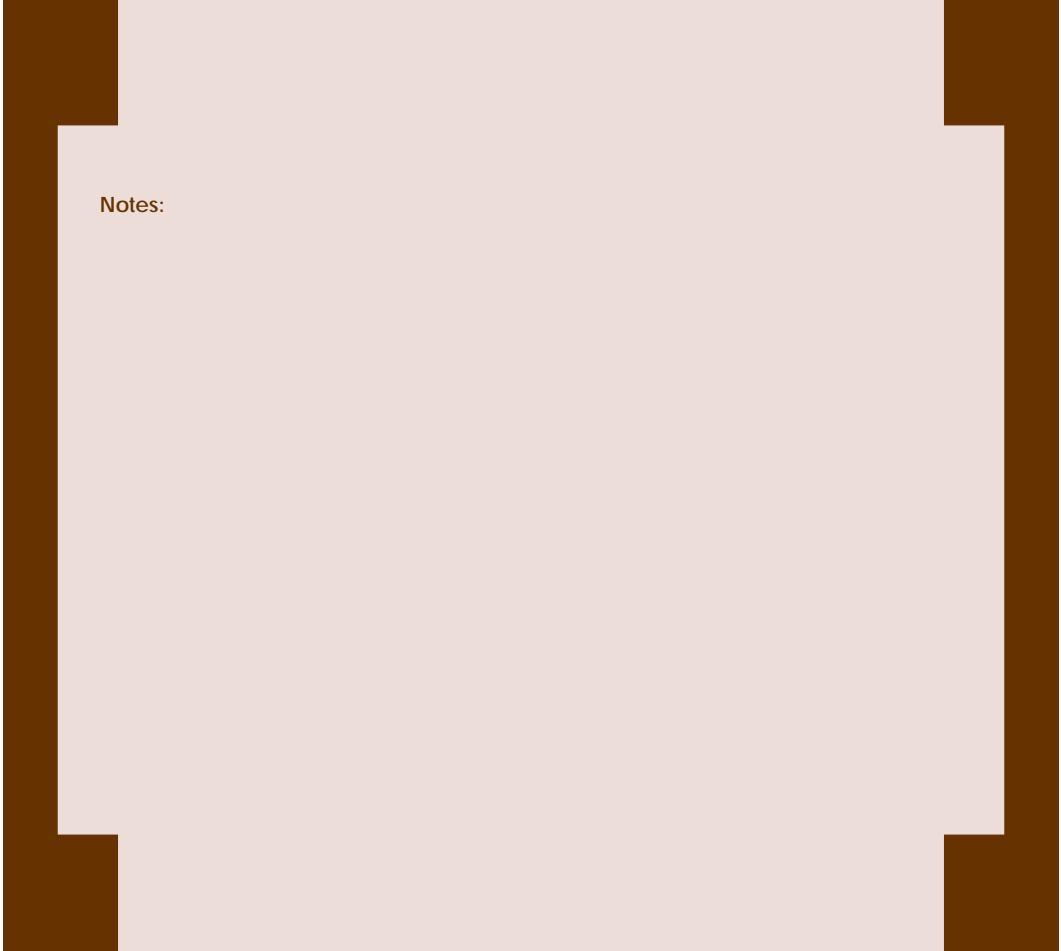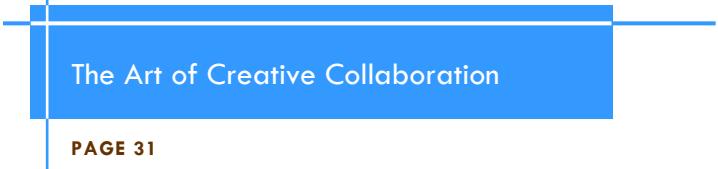
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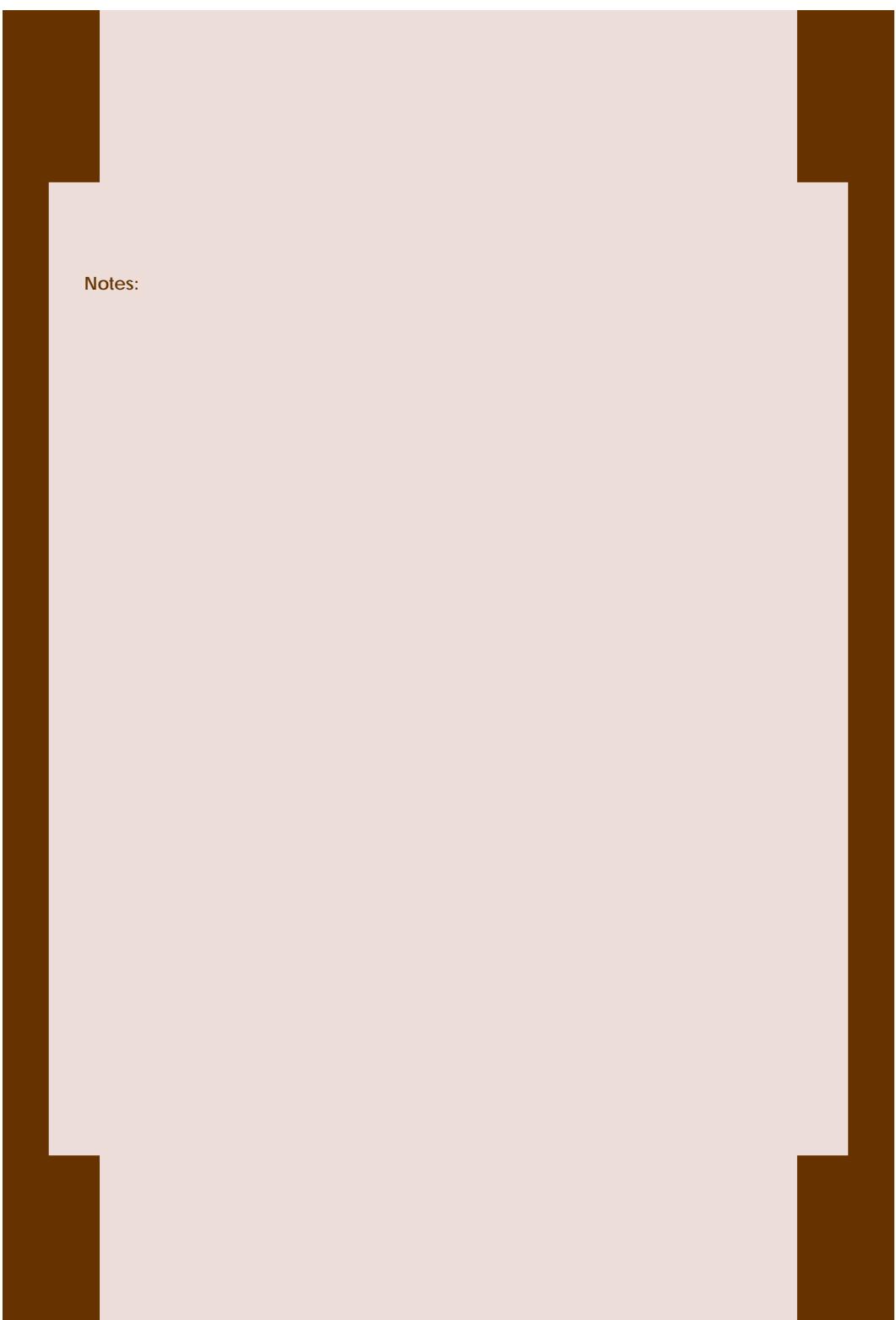The Art of Creative Collaboration

Notes:

Brain Sharing:

Notes:

APPENDIX 3

MANUAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. **Would this manual be useful to the local church?**

   1…....2…….3…......4…......5..…...6.……7…......8..…...9…......10
   Not very useful…………………………somewhat useful………………………….very useful

2. **Is the order and flow of the manual logical and easy to follow?**

   1…....2…….3…......4…......5..…...6.……7…......8..…...9…......10
   Confusing…………………………somewhat clear…………………………..very clear

3. **Does the manual clearly define key terms?**

   1…....2…….3…......4…......5..…...6.……7…......8..…...9…......10
   Confusing…………………………somewhat clear…………………………..very clear

4. **Is the content helpful?**

   1…....2…….3…......4…......5..…...6.……7…......8..…...9…......10
   Not very helpful…………………………somewhat helpful…………………………..very helpful

5. **Is the theological basis convincing regarding teams?**

   1…....2…….3…......4…......5..…...6.……7…......8..…...9…......10
   Not very convincing…………………somewhat convincing…………………….very convincing

6. **Is the theological basis convincing regarding creativity?**

   1…....2…….3…......4…......5..…...6.……7…......8..…...9…......10
   Not very convincing…………………somewhat convincing…………………….very convincing

7. **Does the fact that the manual acknowledges concerns give it balance?**

   1…....2…….3…......4…......5..…...6.……7…......8..…...9…......10
   No balance……………………...some balance………..………………very balanced

8. Are the steps for developing a Creativity Team clear and easy to follow?

1…....2……3…....4…....5..…..6……7…....8..…..9…....10
Confusing………………………….somewhat clear…………………………..very clear

9. Do the steps for implementing a Creativity Team provide adequate information for you to easily teach the material and put a team in place at your church?

1…....2……3…....4…....5..…..6……7…....8..…..9…....10
Inadequate…………………………somewhat adequate…………………………..adequate

10. Do the quotes from outside experts "add to" or "distract from" the purpose of the manual?

1…....2……3…....4…....5..…..6……7…....8..…..9…....10
Very distracting………………………….somewhat distracting…………………………..no distraction

11. Do the graphics and layout of the manual enhance or distract from the teaching material?

1…....2……3…....4…....5..…..6……7…....8..…..9…....10
No enhancement………………………….some enhancement…………………………..greatly enhances

12. What are the greatest strengths of the manual?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. What are the weaknesses of the manual? What is missing? How can it be improved?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

14. Would you use this manual to develop and implement a Creativity Team at your church?

1…....2…….3…....4…....5..…..6…….7…....8..…..9…....10
No………………………......maybe…………...……………………..yes

15. Why or why not?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Name: _____

Church: _____

Position: _____

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VITA

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